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CARLYLE'S ESSAYS.

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Essays on the Greater German Poets and Writers. By Thomas Carlyle.

With an Introduction by Ernest Rhys.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE effect upon Carlyle of Goethe and the greater German writers is clearly, after his native conditioning at Ecclefechan and Edinburgh, the most radical thing in his career. In the essays dealing with those writers, which follow in this volume, we have thus an admirable and characteristic prelude not only to such books as the *Sartor* and *Frederick the Great*, but to the whole of Carlyle, since all his work shows traces more or less of the same German stamp. The essays serve, in this, as the finished evidence of what is to be read at large and less formally in the endless Carlyleana that have been poured forth of late years. They let us into the peculiar secrets of his way of thought, his temperament, his literary method; and, as the literary art was for him always something of a religious exercise, they count in a sense as a kind of *Andachtsbuch*, a book of devotion, as well as a book of secular criticism. Mr. Froude, it is true, has protested against so much being made of the German influence in Carlyle's history, which, he says, was altogether secondary to Carlyle's native Scottish idiosyncrasies of thought and idioms of speech. But after allowing very fully for the influence of the stern life, strong character, and other formative circumstance of his father and mother at Ecclefechan, we still find ourselves driven back to Richter, Goethe, Schiller, and other German literary foster-fathers, to account for much in the extraordinary display of his tremendous intellectual energy.

Having concluded so much, one is surprised to find that Carlyle was twenty-five years old before he learnt German at all. He owed his acquaintance with it even then, not to literary persuasions only, but to his study of mineralogy. Madame de Staël's *l'Allemagne* helped to quicken his scientific, into a literary, interest; and it seems, too, that a shrewd friend who evidently understood his philosophical appetite, advised him to learn German, as he would find in it what he wanted. Irving, who is always in friendly evidence in these earlier episodes of Carlyle's life, got him, we learn, a dictionary, "a grammar had to be procured from London, his kind Kirkcaldy friend, Swan, imported books for him from Hamburg, a young man named Jardine taught him in return for lessons in French. 'I could tell you much,' he says in a letter to Murray, dated August 4, 1820, 'about the new heaven and new earth which a slight study of German literature has revealed to me.'"*

By this time, the summer of 1820, Carlyle was at Mainhill, his Edinburgh pupils being disbanded, and his law studies finally thrown aside. Irving, best of friends, most helpful of advisers, spent the summer at Annan, partly to be near him. The two saw a great deal of each other; and Irving spared no opportunity of urging on Carlyle's literary ambition, which as yet had only had a restricted outlet in Brewster's *Encyclopedia* and the like. The following year, he provided Carlyle with keener incitements than his own, in introducing him to Jane Welsh, who thus became a contemporaneous influence with Goethe in his career. Goethe, it may be said specially; not so much Schiller, who did not indeed aid Carlyle morally and intellectually in the same way.

Carlyle was at this time enduring his "fire-baptism" as best he might; and Goethe, above all, helped and inspired him. "In *Werter*, in *Faust*, in *Prometheus*," to quote Professor Froude, "Carlyle found that another as well as

* *Life of Carlyle*, by Richard Garnett, LL.D. (Great Writers Series), page 27.

he had experienced the same emotions with which he was himself so familiar." *Wilhelm Meister* taught him still more. Goethe, in short, had faced the same spiritual problems and philosophical doubts; and achieved Karma. On finishing his first perusal of *Meister*, and walking out into the midnight streets of Edinburgh to think about it, Carlyle for the first time felt that he had discovered the masterful faculty among his contemporaries, which he had been seeking for. It was natural, now, to convey the new light to Jane Welsh; an act of grace, which, as naturally, Irving, having his orthodox fears, a little resented. So German and Scottish romance and poetry played their parts side by side, and interacted curiously in his history. The next step was the translation of *Wilhelm Meister*,—one of the most satisfying translations ever made by a translator of genius. This was published in 1824; and in 1823-24 the "Life of Schiller" was running through the *London Magazine*. Then in 1827, to carry on this chronology of his earlier German performances, his *German Romance* appeared; a volume in which Fouqué, Tieck, Hoffman, Richter, and Goethe are represented, and in which the brief essays on the two last of the five contain notably the germs of much in the longer essays that follow in this volume. From his earlier Goethe essay, in particular, it will be found that Carlyle quotes at some length. The writing and re-writing of the *Sartor Resartus*, and the writing of these later essays, belong appropriately to the same period at Craigenputtock.

Meanwhile he had married his pupil in philosophy and romance, in October 1826; the book, *German Romance*, very appropriately serving, it is pleasant to know, to pay the expenses of that momentous event. In July 1827 came the famous letter from Goethe, wishing him and his joy of the event, and bringing besides copies of *Faust* and other of the master's works, a necklace for Mrs. Carlyle, and some complimentary rhymes. Altogether, a notable stimulus to Carlyle's German proclivities, and his devotion to Goethe, which indeed never wavered. In the letter there are

many encouraging things,—"Lassen Sie mich vorerst, mein Theuerster, von Ihrer Biographie Schillers das Beste sagen. Sie ist merkwürdig," etc. Again, he congratulates Carlyle on having attained the surest intelligence about Schiller's most characteristic qualities, through a sympathetic understanding of his subject. Still better was Goethe's tribute, a little later, to Carlyle's article, published anonymously in the *Edinburgh Review*, on "The State of German Literature," as to whose authorship Goethe wrote to inquire, quite unsuspecting that it was Carlyle's own. This was previous to the Craigenputtock episode, and while the newly-married pair were still at Comely Bank, near Edinburgh.

The article brought also a tribute from a very different critic to Goethe; De Quincey to wit. In a letter to his brother John, Carlyle writes (November 29, 1827) from Comely Bank, "De Quincey praises it in his *Saturday Post*," and in the next sentence but one proceeds to call up vividly the image of his critic, in characteristic terms that it may not be amiss to transpose. It shows Carlyle again in his *rôle* of German propagandist, and throws a light incidentally on De Quincey's own essays on German literature:—"He is one of the smallest men you ever in your life beheld; but with a most gentle and sensible face, only that the teeth are destroyed by opium, and the little bit of an under lip projects like a shelf. He speaks with slow, sad, and soft voice in the politest manner I have ever witnessed, and with great gracefulness and sense, were it not that he seems decidedly given to prosing. Poor little fellow! It might soften a very hard heart to see him so courteous, yet so weak and poor; retiring *home* with his two children to a miserable lodging-house, and writing all day for the king of donkeys, the proprietor of the *Saturday Post*. I lent him Jean Paul's autobiography, which I got lately from Hamburg, and advised him to translate it for Blackwood, that so he might raise a few pounds and fence off the Genius of Hunger yet a little while. Poor little De Quincey! He is an innocent man, and, as you said, extremely *washable* away."

It was in this year of 1827 that Carlyle made yet another of his ineffectual attempts to find a solid footing for himself, in proffering himself as Professor of Moral Philosophy at St. Andrews. Failing this, Craigenputtock became the one way out of the situation; and without Craigenputtock, and other such experience as that of St. Andrews, the *Sartor* possibly had never been written, nor these essays on German literature, that belong to the same strenuous period. "The dreariest spot in all the British dominions,"—so runs Mr. Froude's description of Craigenputtock. "The nearest cottage is more than a mile from it; the elevation, 700 feet above the sea, stunts the trees and limits the garden produce to the hardiest vegetables. The house is gaunt and hungry-looking. It stands with the scanty fields attached as an island in a sea of morass. The landscape is unredeemed either by grace or grandeur, mere undulating hills of grass and heather, with peat bogs in the hollows between them. The belts of firs which now relieve the eye and furnish some kind of shelter were scarcely planted when the Carlyles were in possession."

A little later, as the winter of their first year in the lonely house was settling down, Carlyle gave his brother the following account of their way of life and writing there. As we know now, he was strangely unconscious of the hardship entailed by this life upon his wife; and the picture is coloured accordingly. He found the "Devil's Den," as he had at other times called it, "really substantial, comfortable, and even half elegant. . . . I sit here in my little library and laugh at the howling tempests, for there are green curtains, and a clear fire and papered walls. The 'old kitchen' also is as tight a dining-room as you would wish for me, and has a black clean barred grate, at which when filled with Sanquhar coals you might roast Boreas himself. The good wife too is happy and contented with me and her solitude, which I believe is not to be equalled out of Sahara itself. You cannot figure the stillness of these moors in a

November drizzle. Nevertheless I walk often under cloud of night, in good Ecclefechan clogs, down as far as Carstammon Burn, sometimes to Sandy Wells, conversing with the void heaven in the most pleasant fashion. . . . I write hard all day, and then Jane and I, both learning Spanish for the last month, read a chapter of *Don Quixote* between dinner and tea, and are already half through the first volume, and eager to persevere. After tea I sometimes write again, and then generally go over to Alick and Mary and smoke my last pipe with them; and so I end the day, having done little good, perhaps, but almost no ill that I could help to any creature of God's. So pass our days, except that I sometimes stroll with axe or bill in the plantations, and when I am not writing I am reading." As to my writing, he adds presently in the same letter, which is dated November 26, 1828, "it is only at present a most despicable 'article' entitled 'German Playwrights.' . . . Next I mean to write one on Novalis, and probably a larger one on Voltaire. Some day these roads will be made and skylights mended, and all tight and pargetted, and I shall have leisure to cease reviewing, and try to give work for reviewing."

Jeffrey meanwhile had succeeded to Irving as Carlyle's mentor, in the chronicle of these literary adventures. If Carlyle would only have consulted Jeffrey more, and his own genius less, they would without a doubt have ended differently and successfully. But he had, fortunately, an obstinate courage, and was never a literary opportunist. So the Edinburgh Reviewers, including Brougham, Macaulay, and Sydney Smith, went on shaking their heads over him; and when the editorship of their *Review* fell vacant, and yet another chance thus offered itself, it was quite in the irony of fate that he should fail to profit by it. Extracts from his Craigenputtock Diary show with what a high temper he met all such disappointments. "Read Novalis' Schriften," he writes in February 1829, "for the second time some weeks ago, and wrote a review of them. A strange, mystic, unfathomable book, but full of matter for

most earnest meditation. What is to become (next) of the world and the sciences thereof? Rather, what is to become of *thee* and thy sciences? Thou longest to *act* among thy fellow-men, and canst yet scarcely breathe among them." Again, a little later: "Paper on Novalis for F. R.* just published. Written last January amid the frosts. Generally poor. Novalis is an anti-mechanist—a deep man—the most perfect of modern spirit-seers. I thank him for somewhat." In December 1830, he speaks of having to try and get back the MS. of his essay on "German Literature" from the *Westminster Review*, and in the same passage adds: "*N.B. I have some five pounds to front the world with*—and expect no more for months." A few months earlier we find him writing to John Carlyle in London to the same effect. It seems that the "Early German Literature," "The Nibelungen Lied," and other essays were all part of the extended Literary History of Germany, to which he so often refers about this time, and which eventually had to appear piecemeal, never reaching completion in the way that he had intended. In the compass of these essays, he says, "had I one or two more—for example, Luther, Lessing, Herder—there already lies the best History of German Literature that I can easily write; and so, were there a flourishing prophetic and circumspective essay appended by way of conclusion, we had a very fair *Geschichte*, or at least a *zur Geschichte*, all lying cut and dry, which can be published at any time if it is wanted."

The *Sartor Resartus* was all this while taking shape,—the creative outcome of the same original elements that have their critical expression in the Essays. In July 1831 he set off for London with the manuscripts of both the *Sartor* and the projected *History of German Literature* in his portmanteau. The introduction to the companion volume of the *Sartor*, in this series, has already told the rest of the story in sufficient detail, which need not therefore be further amplified here. So ended one of the most

* *Foreign Review.*

determinative episodes in all Carlyle's strenuous and difficult history.

What is to be said, finally, of the Essays themselves, now that the German cult that they set going has had time to add so much to what Carlyle wrote? They still hold their own as at least the most vigorous and inspiring statement in English criticism of the great men of letters whose lives and writings they describe. With the exception of Matthew Arnold's essay on Heine, and Lewes' *Life of Goethe*, we have had nothing from the next generation of English writers that can at all compare with these essays in sheer stimulus, and in that essential force of thought and word which lies at the heart of what De Quincey called the "literature of power." If we used Carlyle's own nomenclature, and discounted the art, in favour of the spirit of poetry, as he did, we might very well turn his own praise of Richter round upon himself:—"A Poet, and among the highest of his time, we must reckon him, though he wrote no verses; a Philosopher, though he promulgated no systems: for, on the whole, that 'Divine Idea of the World' stood in clear ethereal light before his mind." His potential spirit of poetry, and his reference of all that he meets in his German masters to the stern ideals, partly inherited, partly fashioned for himself, which lay behind all his writings, and all his criticism of life, are as notably apparent in these essays as in the *Sartor Resartus*. And like the *Sartor*, as they belong to the same period, they have the same added note of youth, and the spirit of youth, qualifying that bitterer pessimism which in his later rhetoric is apt to make his writing more medicinal than tonic. Already here, however, one may say of him, in his own translation of Richter's praise of Luther, that "his prose is a half-battle; few deeds are equal to his words." Like the great American, lately dead, who learnt much from him, Walt Whitman, each word to him was a visible and dynamic thing, with an immense strength and individuality behind it,—a thing which seemed to belong at times perhaps rather to nature than to art, but one which at

any rate had art enough in it to live and have its great effect, when many things, conventionally artistic, failed and were altogether forgotten.

Thus it comes that a volume of Carlyle, even of so small a part of him as this contains, even of his work as a reviewer of other men, serves its finely militant purpose, as few things in our later English writers do. "Here on earth," to quote some famous words of his, "we are as soldiers, fighting in a foreign land; that understand not the plan of campaign, and having no need to understand it; seeing well what is at hand to be done. Let us do it like soldiers; with submission, with courage, with a heroic joy." There, in a word, is Carlyle's philosophy, and his characteristic admonition. It is a soldier's message, and one that sounds out clearly and well from the resonant pages of this volume.

E. R.

CARLYLE'S ESSAYS.

NOVALIS.*

[1829.]

A NUMBER of years ago, Jean Paul's copy of *Novalis* led him to infer that the German reading-world was of a quick disposition; inasmuch as, with respect to books that required more than one perusal, it declined perusing them at all. Paul's *Novalis*, we suppose, was of the first Edition, uncut, dusty, and lent him from the Public Library with willingness, nay with joy. But times, it would appear, must be considerably changed since then; indeed, were we to judge of German reading habits from these Volumes of ours, we should draw quite a different conclusion to Paul's; for they are of the fourth Edition, perhaps therefore the ten-thousandth copy, and that of a Book demanding, whether deserving or not, to be oftener read than almost any other it has ever been our lot to examine.

Without at all entering into the merits of Novalis, we may observe that we should reckon it a happy sign of Literature, were so solid a fashion of study here and there established in all countries: for directly in the teeth of most 'intellectual tea-circles,' it may be asserted that no good Book, or good thing of any sort, shows its best face at first; nay that the commonest quality in a true work of Art, if its excellence have any depth and compass, is that at first sight it occasions a certain

* FOREIGN REVIEW, No. 7.—*Novalis Schriften. Herausgegeben von Ludwig Tieck und Friedrich Schlegel* (Novalis' Writings. Edited by Ludwig Tieck and Friedrich Schlegel). Fourth Edition. 2 vols. Berlin, 1826.

disappointment; perhaps even, mingled with its undeniable beauty, a certain feeling of aversion. Not as if we meant, by this remark, to cast a stone at the old guild of literary Improvisators, or any of that diligent brotherhood, whose trade it is to blow soap-bubbles for their fellow-creatures; which bubbles, of course, if they are not seen and admired this moment, will be altogether lost to men's eyes the next. Considering the use of these blowers, in civilised communities, we rather wish them strong lungs, and all manner of prosperity: but simply we would contend that such soap-bubble guild should not become the sole one in Literature; that being undisputably the strongest, it should content itself with this preëminence, and not tyrannically annihilate its less prosperous neighbours. For it should be recollected that Literature positively has other aims than this of amusement from hour to hour; nay perhaps that this, glorious as it may be, is not its highest or true aim. We do say, therefore, that the Improvisator corporation should be kept within limits; and readers, at least a certain small class of readers, should understand that some few departments of human inquiry have still their depths and difficulties; that the abstruse is not precisely synonymous with the absurd; nay that light itself may be darkness, in a certain state of the eyesight; that, in short, cases may occur when a little patience and some attempt at thought would not be altogether superfluous in reading. Let the mob of gentlemen keep their own ground, and be happy and applauded there: if they overstep that ground, they indeed may flourish the better for it, but the reader will suffer damage. For in this way, a reader, accustomed to see through everything in one second of time, comes to forget that his wisdom and critical penetration are finite and not infinite; and so commits more than one mistake in his conclusions. The Reviewer too, who indeed is only a preparatory reader, as it were a sort of sieve and drainer for the use of more luxurious readers, soon follows his example: these two react still farther on the mob of gentlemen; and so among them all, with this action and reaction, matters grow worse and worse.

It rather seems to us as if, in this respect of faithfulness in reading, the Germans were somewhat ahead of us English; at least we have no such proof to show of it as that fourth Edition of *Novalis*. Our Coleridge's *Friend*, for example, and *Biographia Literaria* are but a slight business compared with these *Schriften;* little more than the Alphabet, and that in gilt letters, of such Philosophy and Art as is here taught in the form

of Grammar and Rhetorical Compend; yet Coleridge's works were triumphantly condemned by the whole reviewing world, as clearly unintelligible; and among readers they have still but an unseen circulation; like living brooks, hidden for the present under mountains of froth and theatrical snow-paper, and which only at a distant day, when these mountains shall have decomposed themselves into gas and earthy residuum, may roll forth in their true limpid shape, to gladden the general eye with what beauty and everlasting freshness does reside in them. It is admitted too, on all hands, that Mr. Coleridge is a man of 'genius,' that is, a man having more intellectual insight than other men; and strangely enough, it is taken for granted, at the same time, that he has less intellectual insight than any other. For why else are his doctrines to be thrown out of doors, without examination, as false and worthless, simply because they are obscure? Or how is their so palpable falsehood to be accounted for to our minds, except on this extraordinary ground: that a man able to originate deep thoughts (such is the meaning of genius) is unable to *see* them when originated; that the creative intellect of a Philosopher is destitute of that mere faculty of logic which belongs to 'all Attorneys, and men educated in Edinburgh?' The Cambridge carrier, when asked whether his horse could "draw inferences," readily replied, "Yes, anything in reason;" but here, it seems, is a man of genius who has no similar gift.

We ourselves, we confess, are too young in the study of human nature to have met with any such anomaly. Never yet has it been our fortune to fall in with any man of genius whose conclusions did not correspond better with his premises, and not worse, than those of other men; whose genius, when it once came to be understood, did not manifest itself in a deeper, fuller, truer view of all things human and divine, than the clearest of your so laudable 'practical men' had claim to. Such, we say, has been our uniform experience; so uniform, that we now hardly ever expect to see it contradicted. True it is, the old Pythagorean argument of 'the master said it,' has long since ceased to be available: in these days, no man, except the Pope of Rome, is altogether exempt from error of judgment; doubtless a man of genius may chance to adopt false opinions; nay rather, like all other sons of Adam, except that same enviable Pope, *must* occasionally adopt such. Nevertheless, we reckon it a good maxim, That no error is fully confuted till we have seen not only *that* it is an error, but how it became

one; till finding that it clashes with the principles of truth established in our own mind, we find also in what way it had seemed to harmonise with the principles of truth established in that other mind, perhaps so unspeakably superior to ours. Treated by this method, it still appears to us, according to the old saying, that the errors of a wise man are literally more instructive than the truths of a fool. For the wise man travels in lofty, far-seeing regions; the fool, in low-lying, high-fenced lanes: retracing the footsteps of the former, to discover where he deviated, whole provinces of the Universe are laid open to us; in the path of the latter, granting even that he have not deviated at all, little is laid open to us but two wheel-ruts and two hedges.

On these grounds we reckon it more profitable, in almost any case, to have to do with men of depth than with men of shallowness: and were it possible, we would read no book that was not written by one of the former class; all members of which we would love and venerate, how perverse soever they might seem to us at first; nay though, after the fullest investigation, we still found many things to pardon in them. Such of our readers as at all participate in this predilection will not blame us for bringing them acquainted with Novalis, a man of the most indisputable talent, poetical and philosophical; whose opinions, extraordinary, nay altogether wild and baseless as they often appear, are not without a strict coherence in his own mind, and will lead any other mind, that examines them faithfully, into endless considerations; opening the strangest inquiries, new truths, or new possibilities of truth, a whole unexpected world of thought, where, whether for belief or denial, the deepest questions await us.

In what is called reviewing such a book as this, we are aware that to the judicious craftsman two methods present themselves. The first and most convenient is, for the Reviewer to perch himself resolutely, as it were, on the shoulder of his Author, and therefrom to show as if he commanded him and looked down on him by natural superiority of stature. Whatsoever the great man says or does, the little man shall treat with an air of knowingness and light condescending mockery; professing, with much covert sarcasm, that this and that other is beyond *his* comprehension, and cunningly asking his readers if they comprehend it! Herein it will help him mightily, if, besides description, he can quote a few passages, which, in their detached state, and taken most probably in quite a wrong

acceptation of the words, shall sound strange, and, to certain hearers, even absurd; all which will be easy enough, if he have any handiness in the business, and address the right audience; truths, as this world goes, being true only for those that have *some* understanding of them; as, for instance, in the Yorkshire Wolds, and Thames Coal-ships, Christian men enough might be found, at this day, who, if you read them the Thirty-ninth of the *Principia*, would 'grin intelligence from ear to ear.' On the other hand, should our Reviewer meet with any passage, the wisdom of which, deep, plain and palpable to the simplest, might cause misgivings in the reader, as if here were a man of half-unknown endowment, whom perhaps it were better to wonder at than laugh at, our Reviewer either suppresses it, or citing it with an air of meritorious candour, calls upon his Author, in a tone of command and encouragement, to lay aside his transcendental crotchets, and write always thus, and *he* will admire him. Whereby the reader again feels comforted; proceeds swimmingly to the conclusion of the 'Article,' and shuts it with a victorious feeling, not only that he and the Reviewer understand this man, but also that, with some rays of fancy and the like, the man is little better than a living mass of darkness.

In this way does the small Reviewer triumph over great Authors; but it is the triumph of a fool. In this way too does he recommend himself to certain readers, but it is the recommendation of a parasite, and of no true servant. The servant would have spoken truth, in this case; truth, that it might have profited, however harsh: the parasite glozes his master with sweet speeches, that he may filch applause, and certain 'guineas per sheet,' from him; substituting for ignorance which was harmless, error which is not so. And yet to the vulgar reader, naturally enough, that flattering unction is full of solacement. In fact, to a reader of this sort few things can be more alarming than to find that his own little Parish, where he lived so snug and absolute, is, after all, *not* the whole Universe; that beyond the hill which screened his house from the east wind, and grew his kitchen-vegetables so sweetly, there are other hills and other hamlets, nay mountains and towered cities; with all which, if he would continue to pass for a geographer, he must forthwith make himself acquainted. Now this Reviewer, often his fellow Parishioner, is a safe man; leads him pleasantly to the hill-top; shows him that indeed there are, or seem to be, other expanses, these too of boundless extent: but with only cloud mountains, and *fatamorgana* cities; the true character of that region being

Vacuity, or at best a stony desert tenanted by Gryphons and Chimeras.

Surely, if printing is not, like courtier speech, 'the art of *concealing* thought,' all this must be blamable enough. Is it the Reviewer's real trade to be a pander of laziness, self-conceit and all manner of contemptuous stupidity on the part of his reader; carefully ministering to these propensities; carefully fencing-off whatever might invade that fool's-paradise with news of disturbance? Is he the priest of Literature and Philosophy, to interpret their mysteries to the common man; as a faithful preacher, teaching him to understand what is adapted for his understanding, to reverence what is adapted for higher understandings than his? Or merely the lackey of Dulness, striving for certain wages, of pudding or praise, by the month or quarter, to perpetuate the reign of presumption and triviality on earth? If the latter, will he not be counselled to pause for an instant, and reflect seriously, whether starvation were worse or were better than such a dog's-existence?

Our reader perceives that we are for adopting the second method with regard to Novalis; that we wish less to insult over this highly-gifted man, than to gain some insight into him; that we look upon his mode of being and thinking as very singular, but not therefore necessarily very contemptible; as a matter, in fact, worthy of examination, and difficult beyond most others to examine wisely and with profit. Let no man expect that, in this case, a Samson is to be led forth, blinded and manacled, to make him sport. Nay, might it not, in a spiritual sense, be death, as surely it would be damage, to the small man himself? For is not this habit of sneering at all greatness, of forcibly bringing down all greatness to his own height, one chief cause which keeps that height so very inconsiderable? Come of it what may, we have no refreshing dew for the small man's vanity in this place; nay rather, as charitable brethren, and fellow-sufferers from that same evil, we would gladly lay the sickle to that reed-grove of self-conceit, which has grown round him, and reap it altogether away, that so the true figure of the world, and his own true figure, might no longer be utterly hidden from him. Does this our brother, then, refuse to accompany us, without such allurements? He must even retain our best wishes, and abide by his own hearth.

Farther, to the honest few who still go along with us on this occasion, we are bound in justice to say that, far from looking down on Novalis, we cannot place either them or ourselves on

a level with him. To explain so strange an individuality, to exhibit a mind of this depth and singularity before the minds of readers so foreign to him in every sense, would be a vain pretension in us. With the best will, and after repeated trials, we have gained but a feeble notion of Novalis for ourselves: his Volumes come before us with every disadvantage; they are the posthumous works of a man cut off in early life, while his opinions, far from being matured for the public eye, were still lying crude and disjointed before his own; for most part written down in the shape of detached aphorisms, 'none of them,' as he says himself, 'untrue or unimportant to his own mind,' but naturally requiring to be remodelled, expanded, compressed, as the matter cleared up more and more into logical unity; at best but fragments of a great scheme which he did not live to realise. If his Editors, Friedrich Schlegel and Ludwig Tieck, declined commenting on these Writings, we may well be excused for declining to do so. 'It cannot be our purpose here,' says Tieck, 'to recommend the following Works, or to judge them; probable as it must be that any judgment delivered at this stage of the matter would be a premature and unripe one: for a spirit of such originality must first be comprehended, his will understood, and his loving intention felt and replied to; so that not till his ideas have taken root in other minds, and brought forth new ideas, shall we see rightly, from the historical sequence, what place he himself occupied, and what relation to his country he truly bore.'

Meanwhile, Novalis is a figure of such importance in German Literature, that no student of it can pass him by without attention. If we must not attempt interpreting this Work for our readers, we are bound at least to point out its existence, and according to our best knowledge direct such of them as take an interest in the matter how to investigate it farther for their own benefit. For this purpose, it may be well that we leave our Author to speak chiefly for himself; subjoining only such expositions as cannot be dispensed with for even verbal intelligibility, and as we can offer on our own surety with some degree of confidence. By way of basis to the whole inquiry, we prefix some particulars of his short life; a part of our task which Tieck's clear and graceful Narrative, given as 'Preface to the Third Edition,' renders easy for us.

Friedrich von Hardenberg, better known in Literature by the pseudonym 'Novalis,' was born on the 2d of May 1772, at

a country residence of his family in the Grafschaft of Mansfeld, in Saxony. His father, who had been a soldier in youth, and still retained a liking for that profession, was at this time Director of the Saxon Salt-works; an office of some considerable trust and dignity. Tieck says, 'he was a vigorous, unweariedly active man, of open, resolute character, a true German. His religious feelings made him a member of the Herrnhut Communion; yet his disposition continued gay, frank, rugged and downright.' The mother also was distinguished for her worth; 'a pattern of noble piety and Christian mildness;' virtues which her subsequent life gave opportunity enough for exercising.

On the young Friedrich, whom we may continue to call Novalis, the qualities of his parents must have exercised more than usual influence; for he was brought up in the most retired manner, with scarcely any associate but a sister one year older than himself, and the two brothers that were next to him in age. A decidedly religious temper seems to have infused itself, under many benignant aspects, over the whole family: in Novalis especially it continued the ruling principle through life; manifested no less in his scientific speculations than in his feelings and conduct. In childhood he is said to have been remarkable chiefly for the entire, enthusiastic affection with which he loved his mother; and for a certain still, secluded disposition, such that he took no pleasure in boyish sports, and rather shunned the society of other children. Tieck mentions that, till his ninth year, he was reckoned nowise quick of apprehension; but at this period, strangely enough, some violent biliary disease, which had almost cut him off, seemed to awaken his faculties into proper life, and he became the readiest, eagerest learner in all branches of his scholarship.

In his eighteenth year, after a few months of preparation in some *Gymnasium*, the only instruction he appears to have received in any public school, he repaired to Jena; and continued there for three years; after which he spent one season in the Leipzig University, and another, 'to complete his studies,' in that of Wittenberg. It seems to have been at Jena that he became acquainted with Friedrich Schlegel; where also, we suppose, he studied under Fichte. For both of these men he conceived a high admiration and affection; and both of them had, clearly enough, 'a great and abiding effect on his whole life.' Fichte, in particular, whose lofty eloquence and clear calm enthusiasm are said to have made him irresistible as a

teacher,* had quite gained Novalis to his doctrines; indeed the *Wissenschaftslehre*, which, as we are told of the latter, 'he studied with unwearied zeal,' appears to have been the groundwork of all his future speculations in Philosophy. Besides these metaphysical inquiries, and the usual attainments in classical literature, Novalis seems 'to have devoted himself with ardour to the Physical Sciences, and to Mathematics the basis of them:' at an early period of his life he had read much of History 'with extraordinary eagerness;' Poems had from of old been 'the delight of his leisure;' particularly that species denominated *Mährchen* (Traditionary Tale), which continued a favourite with him to the last, as almost from infancy it had been a chosen amusement of his to read these compositions, and even to recite such, of his own invention. One remarkable piece of that sort he has himself left us, inserted in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, his chief literary performance.

But the time had now arrived when study must become subordinate to action, and what is called a profession be fixed upon. At the breaking-out of the French War, Novalis had been seized with a strong and altogether unexpected taste for a military life: however, the arguments and pressing entreaties of his friends ultimately prevailed over this whim; it seems to have been settled that he should follow his father's line of occupation; and so, about the end of 1794, he removed to Arnstadt in Thuringia, 'to train himself in practical affairs under the Kreis-Amtmann Just.' In this *Kreis-Amtmann* (Manager of a Circle) he found a wise and kind friend; applied himself honestly to business; and in all his serious calculations may have looked forward to a life as smooth and commonplace as his past years had been. One incident, and that too of no unusual sort, appears, in Tieck's opinion, to have altered the whole form of his existence.

'It was not very long after his arrival at Arnstadt, when in a country mansion of the neighbourhood, he became acquainted with Sophie von K——. The first glance of this fair and wonderfully lovely form was decisive for his whole life; nay, we may say that the feeling, which now penetrated and inspired him, was the substance and essence of his whole life. Sometimes, in the look and figure of a child, there will

* Schelling, we have been informed, gives account of Fichte and his *Wissenschaftslehre* to the following effect: 'The Philosophy of Fichte was like lightning; it appeared only for a moment, but it kindled a fire which will burn forever.'

stamp itself an expression, which, as it is too angelic and ethereally beautiful, we are forced to call unearthly or celestial; and commonly, at sight of such purified and almost transparent faces, there comes on us a fear that they are too tender and delicately fashioned for this life; that it is Death, or Immortality, which looks forth so expressively on us from these glancing eyes; and too often a quick decay converts our mournful foreboding into certainty. Still more affecting are such figures when their first period is happily passed over, and they come before us blooming on the eve of maidhood. All persons that have known this wondrous loved one of our Friend, agree in testifying that no description can express in what grace and celestial harmony the fair being moved, what beauty shone in her, what softness and majesty encircled her. Novalis became a poet every time he chanced to speak of it. She had concluded her thirteenth year when he first saw her: the spring and summer of 1795 were the blooming time of his life; every hour that he could spare from business he spent in Grüningen: and in the fall of that same year he obtained the wished-for promise from Sophie's parents.'

Unhappily, however, these halcyon days were of too short continuance. Soon after this, Sophie fell dangerously sick 'of a fever, attended with pains in the side;' and her lover had the worst consequences to fear. By and by, indeed, the fever left her; but not the pain, 'which by its violence still spoiled for her many a fair hour,' and gave rise to various apprehensions, though the Physician asserted that it was of no importance. Partly satisfied with this favourable prognostication, Novalis had gone to Weissenfels, to his parents; and was full of business; being now appointed Auditor in the department of which his father was Director: through winter the news from Grüningen were of a favourable sort; in spring he visited the family himself, and found his Sophie to all appearance well. But suddenly, in summer, his hopes and occupations were interrupted by tidings that 'she was in Jena, and had undergone a surgical operation.' Her disease was an abscess in the liver: it had been her wish that he should not hear of her danger till the worst were over. The Jena Surgeon gave hopes of recovery, though a slow one; but ere long the operation had to be repeated, and now it was feared that his patient's strength was too far exhausted. The young maiden bore all this with inflexible courage and the cheerfulest resignation: her Mother and Sister, Novalis, with his Parents and two of his Brothers, all deeply interested in the event, did their utmost to comfort her. In December, by her own wish, she returned home; but

it was evident that she grew weaker and weaker. Novalis went and came between Grüningen and Weissenfels, where also he found a house of mourning; for Erasmus, one of these two Brothers, had long been sickly, and was now believed to be dying.

'The 17th of March,' says Tieck, 'was the fifteenth birthday of his Sophie; and on the 19th, about noon, she departed. No one durst tell Novalis these tidings; at last his Brother Carl undertook it. The poor youth shut himself up, and after three days and three nights of weeping, set out for Arnstadt, that there, with his true friend, he might be near the spot, which now hid the remains of what was dearest to him. On the 14th of April, his Brother Erasmus also left this world. Novalis wrote to inform his Brother Carl of the event, who had been obliged to make a journey into Lower Saxony: "Be of good courage," said he, "Erasmus has prevailed; the flowers of our fair garland are dropping off Here, one by one, that they may be united Yonder, lovelier and forever."'

Among the papers published in these Volumes are three letters, written about this time, which mournfully indicate the author's mood. 'It has grown Evening around me,' says he, 'while I was looking into the red of Morning. My grief is boundless as my love. For three years she has been my hourly thought. She alone bound me to life, to the country, to my occupations. With her I am parted from all; for now I scarcely have *myself* any more. But it has grown Evening; and I feel as if I had to travel early; and so I would fain be at rest, and see nothing but kind faces about me;—all in her spirit would I live, be soft and mild-hearted as she was.' And again, some weeks later: 'I live over the old, bygone life here, in still meditation. Yesterday I was twenty-five years old. I was in Grüningen, and stood beside her grave. It is a friendly spot; enclosed with simple white railing; lies apart, and high. There is still room in it. The village, with its blooming gardens, leans up round the hill; and at this point and that the eye loses itself in blue distances. I know you would have liked to stand by me, and stick the flowers, my birthday gifts, one by one into her hillock. This time two years, she made me a gay present, with a flag and national cockade on it. To-day her parents gave me the little things which she, still joyfully, had received on her last birthday. Friend,—it continues Evening, and will soon be Night. If you go away, think of me kindly, and visit, when you return, the still house, where your Friend rests forever, with the

ashes of his beloved. Fare you well!'—Nevertheless, a singular composure came over him; from the very depths of his grief arose a peace and pure joy, such as till then he had never known.

'In this season,' observes Tieck, 'Novalis lived only to his sorrow: it was natural for him to regard the visible and the invisible world as one; and to distinguish Life and Death only by his longing for the latter. At the same time too, Life became for him a glorified Life; and his whole being melted away as into a bright, conscious vision of a higher Existence. From the sacredness of Sorrow, from heartfelt love and the pious wish for death, his temper and all his conceptions are to be explained: and it seems possible that this time, with its deep griefs, planted in him the germ of death, if it was not, in any case, his appointed lot to be so soon snatched away from us.

'He remained many weeks in Thuringia; and came back comforted and truly purified, to his engagements; which he pursued more zealously than ever, though he now regarded himself as a stranger on the earth. In this period, some earlier, many later, especially in the Autumn of this year, occur most of those compositions, which, in the way of extract and selection, we have here given to the Public, under the title of *Fragments;* so likewise the *Hymns to the Night.*'

Such is our Biographer's account of this matter, and of the weighty inference it has led him to. We have detailed it the more minutely, and almost in the very words of the text, the better to put our readers in a condition for judging on what grounds Tieck rests his opinion, That herein lies the key to the whole spiritual history of Novalis, that 'the feeling which now penetrated and inspired him may be said to have been the substance of his Life.' It would ill become us to contradict one so well qualified to judge of all subjects, and who enjoyed such peculiar opportunities for forming a right judgment of this: meanwhile we may say that, to our own minds, after all consideration, the certainty of this hypothesis will nowise become clear. Or rather, perhaps, it is to the expression, to the too determinate and exclusive language in which the hypothesis is worded, that we should object; for so plain does the truth of the case seem to us, we cannot but believe that Tieck himself would consent to modify his statement. That the whole philosophical and moral existence of such a man as Novalis should have been shaped and determined by the death of a young girl, almost a child, specially distinguished, so far as is shown, by nothing save her beauty, which at any rate must have been very

short-lived,—will doubtless seem to every one a singular concatenation. We cannot but think that some result precisely similar in moral effect might have been attained by many different means; nay that by one means or another, it would not have failed to be attained. For spirits like Novalis, earthly fortune is in no instance so sweet and smooth, that it does not by and by teach the great doctrine of *Entsagen*, of 'Renunciation,' by which alone, as a wise man well known to Herr Tieck has observed, 'can the real entrance on Life be properly said to begin.' Experience, the grand Schoolmaster, seems to have taught Novalis this doctrine very early, by the wreck of his first passionate wish; and herein lies the real influence of Sophie von K. on his character; an influence which, as we imagine, many other things might and would have equally exerted: for it is less the severity of the Teacher than the aptness of the Pupil that secures the lesson; nor do the purifying effects of frustrated Hope, and Affection which in this world will ever be homeless, depend on the worth or loveliness of its objects, but on that of the heart which cherished it, and can draw mild wisdom from so stern a disappointment. We do not say that Novalis continued the same as if this young maiden had not been; causes and effects connecting every man and thing with every other extend through all Time and Space; but surely it appears unjust to represent him as so altogether pliant in the hands of Accident; a mere pipe for Fortune to play tunes on; and which sounded a mystic, deep, almost unearthly melody, simply because a young woman was beautiful and mortal.

We feel the more justified in these hard-hearted and so unromantic strictures, on reading the very next paragraph of Tieck's Narrative. Directly on the back of this occurrence, Novalis goes to Freyberg; and there in 1798, it may be therefore somewhat more or somewhat less than a year after the death of his first love, forms an acquaintance, and an engagement to marry, with a 'Julie von Ch——'! Indeed, ever afterwards, to the end, his life appears to have been more than usually cheerful and happy. Tieck knows not well what to say of this betrothment, which in the eyes of most Novelreaders will have so shocking an appearance: he admits that 'perhaps to any but his intimate friends it may seem singular;' asserts, notwithstanding, that 'Sophie, as may be seen also in his writings, continued the centre of his thoughts; nay, as one departed, she stood in higher reverence with him than when visible and near;' and hurrying on, almost as over an unsafe

subject, declares that Novalis felt nevertheless 'as if loveliness of mind and person might, in some measure, replace his loss;' and so leaves us to our own reflections on the matter. We consider it as throwing light on the above criticism; and greatly restricting our acceptance of Tieck's theory.

Yet perhaps, after all, it is only in a Minerva-Press Novel, or to the more tender Imagination, that such a proceeding would seem very blamable. Constancy in its true sense, may be called the root of all excellence; especially excellent is constancy in active well-doing, in friendly helpfulness to those that love us, and to those that hate us: but constancy in passive suffering, again, in spite of the high value put upon it in Circulating Libraries, is a distinctly inferior virtue, rather an accident than a virtue, and at all events is of extreme rarity in this world. To Novalis, his Sophie might still be as a saintly presence, mournful and unspeakably mild, to be worshipped in the inmost shrine of his memory: but worship of this sort is not man's sole business; neither should we censure Novalis that he dries his tears, and once more looks abroad with hope on the earth, which is still, as it was before, the strangest complex of mystery and light, of joy as well as sorrow. 'Life belongs to the living; and he that lives must be prepared for vicissitudes.' The questionable circumstance with Novalis is his perhaps too great rapidity in that second courtship; a fault or misfortune the more to be regretted, as this marriage also was to remain a project, and only the anticipation of it to be enjoyed by him.

It was for the purpose of studying mineralogy, under the famous Werner, that Novalis had gone to Freyberg. For this science he had great fondness, as indeed for all the physical sciences; which, if we may judge from his writings, he seems to have prosecuted on a great and original principle, very different both from that of our idle theorisers and generalisers, and that of the still more melancholy class who merely 'collect facts,' and for the torpor or total extinction of the thinking faculty, strive to make up by the more assiduous use of the blowpipe and goniometer. The commencement of a work, entitled the *Disciples at Sais*, intended, as Tieck informs us, to be a 'Physical Romance,' was written in Freyberg, at this time: but it lay unfinished, unprosecuted; and now comes before us as a very mysterious fragment, disclosing scientific depths, which we have not light to see into, much less means to

fathom and accurately measure. The various hypothetic views of 'Nature,' that is, of the visible Creation, which are here given out in the words of the several 'Pupils,' differ, almost all of them, more or less, from any that we have ever elsewhere met with. To this work we shall have occasion to refer more particularly in the sequel.

The acquaintance which Novalis formed, soon after this, with the elder Schlegel (August Wilhelm), and still more that of Tieck, whom also he first met in Jena, seems to have operated a considerable diversion in his line of study. Tieck and the Schlegels, with some less active associates, among whom are now mentioned Wackenroder and Novalis, were at this time engaged in their far-famed campaign against Duncedom, or what called itself the 'Old School' of Literature; which old and rather despicable 'School' they had already, both by regular and guerilla warfare, reduced to great straits; as ultimately, they are reckoned to have succeeded in utterly extirpating it, or at least driving it back to the very confines of its native Cimmeria. It seems to have been in connection with these men, that Novalis first came before the world as a writer: certain of his *Fragments* under the title of *Blüthenstaub* (Pollen of Flowers), his *Hymns to the Night*, and various poetical compositions, were sent forth in F. Schlegel's *Musen-Almanach* and other periodicals under the same or kindred management. Novalis himself seems to profess that it was Tieck's influence which chiefly 'reawakened Poetry in him.' As to what reception these pieces met with, we have no information: however, Novalis seems to have been ardent and diligent in his new pursuit, as in his old ones; and no less happy than diligent.

'In the summer of 1800,' says Tieck, 'I saw him for the first time, while visiting my friend Wilhelm Schlegel; and our acquaintance soon became the most confidential friendship. They were bright days those, which we passed with Schlegel, Schelling and some other friends. On my return homewards, I visited him in his house, and made acquaintance with his family. Here he read me the *Disciples at Sais*, and many of his *Fragments*. He escorted me as far as Halle; and we enjoyed in Giebichenstein, in the Riechardts' house, some other delightful hours. About this time, the first thought of his *Ofterdingen* had occurred. At an earlier period, certain of his *Spiritual Songs* had been composed: they were to form part of a Christian Hymnbook, which he meant to accompany with a collection of Sermons. For the rest, he was very diligent in his professional labours; whatever he did was done with the heart; the smallest concern was not insignificant to him.'

The professional labours here alluded to, seem to have left much leisure on his hands; room for frequent change of place, and even of residence. Not long afterwards, we find him 'living for a long while in a solitary spot of the Güldne Aue in Thuringia, at the foot of the Kyffhäuser Mountain;' his chief society two military men, subsequently Generals; 'in which solitude great part of his *Ofterdingen* was written.' The first volume of this *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, a sort of Art-Romance, intended, as he himself said, to be an 'Apotheosis of Poetry,' was erelong published; under what circumstances, or with what result, we have, as before, no notice. Tieck had for some time been resident in Jena, and at intervals saw much of Novalis. On preparing to quit that abode, he went to pay him a farewell visit at Weissenfels; found him 'somewhat paler,' but full of gladness and hope; 'quite inspired with plans of his future happiness; his house was already fitted up; in a few months he was to be wedded: no less zealously did he speak of the speedy conclusion of *Ofterdingen*, and other books; his life seemed expanding in the richest activity and love.' This was in 1800: four years ago Novalis had longed and looked for death, and it was not appointed him; now life is again rich and far-extending in his eyes, and its close is at hand. Tieck parted with him, and it proved to be forever.

In the month of August, Novalis, preparing for his journey to Freyberg on so joyful an occasion, was alarmed with an appearance of blood proceeding from the lungs. The Physician treated it as a slight matter; nevertheless, the marriage was postponed. He went to Dresden with his Parents, for medical advice; abode there for some time in no improving state; on learning the accidental death of a young brother at home, he ruptured a blood-vessel; and the Doctor then declared his malady incurable. This, as usual in such maladies, was nowise the patient's own opinion; he wished to try a warmer climate, but was thought too weak for the journey. In January (1801) he returned home, visibly, to all but himself, in rapid decline. His bride had already been to see him, in Dresden. We may give the rest in Tieck's words:

'The nearer he approached his end, the more confidently did he expect a speedy recovery; for the cough diminished, and excepting languor, he had no feeling of sickness. With the hope and the longing for life, new talent and fresh strength seemed also to awaken in him; he thought, with renewed love, of all his projected labours; he determined

on writing *Ofterdingen* over again from the very beginning; and shortly before his death, he said on one occasion, "Never till now did I know what Poetry was; innumerable Songs and Poems, and of quite different stamp from any of my former ones, have arisen in me." From the nineteenth of March, the death-day of his Sophie, he became visibly weaker; many of his friends visited him; and he felt great joy when, on the twenty-first, his true and oldest friend, Friedrich Schlegel, came to him from Jena. With him he conversed at great length; especially upon their several literary operations. During these days he was very lively; his nights too were quiet; and he enjoyed pretty sound sleep. On the twenty-fifth, about six in the morning, he made his brother hand him certain books, that he might look for something; then he ordered breakfast, and talked cheerfully till eight; towards nine he bade his brother play a little to him on the harpsichord, and in the course of the music fell asleep. Friedrich Schlegel soon afterwards came into the room, and found him quietly sleeping: this sleep lasted till near twelve, when without the smallest motion he passed away, and, unchanged in death, retained his common friendly look as if he yet lived.

'So died,' continues the affectionate Biographer, 'before he had completed his twenty-ninth year, this our Friend; in whom his extensive acquirements, his philosophical talent and his poetic genius must alike obtain our love and admiration. As he had so far outrun his time, our country might have expected extraordinary things from such gifts, had this early death not overtaken him: as it is, the unfinished Writings he left behind him have already had a wide influence; and many of his great thoughts will yet, in time coming, lend their inspiration, and noble minds and deep thinkers will be enlightened and enkindled by the sparks of his genius.

'Novalis was tall, slender and of noble proportions. He wore his light-brown hair in long clustering locks, which at that time was less unusual than it would be now; his hazel eye was clear and glancing; and the colour of his face, especially of the fine brow, almost transparent. Hand and foot were somewhat too large, and without fine character. His look was at all times cheerful and kind. For those who distinguish a man only in so far as he puts himself forward, or by studious breeding, by fashionable bearing, endeavours to shine or to be singular, Novalis was lost in the crowd: to the more practised eye, again, he presented a figure which might be called beautiful. In outline and expression his face strikingly resembled that of the Evangelist John, as we see him in the large noble Painting by Albrecht Dürer, preserved at Nürnberg and München.

'In speaking, he was lively and loud, his gestures strong. I never saw him tired: though we had talked till far in the night, it was still only on purpose that he stopped, for the sake of rest, and even then he used to read before sleeping. Tedium he never felt, even in oppressive company, among mediocre men; for he was sure to find out one or other, who could give him yet some new piece of knowledge, such as

he could turn to use, insignificant as it might seem. His kindliness, his frank bearing, made him a universal favourite: his skill in the art of social intercourse was so great, that smaller minds did not perceive how high he stood above them. Though in conversation he delighted most to unfold the deeps of the soul, and spoke as inspired of the regions of invisible worlds, yet was he mirthful as a child; would jest in free artless gaiety, and heartily give-in to the jestings of his company. Without vanity, without learned haughtiness, far from every affectation and hypocrisy, he was a genuine, true man, the purest and loveliest embodiment of a high immortal spirit.'

So much for the outward figure and history of Novalis. Respecting his inward structure and significance, which our readers are here principally interested to understand, we have already acknowledged that we had no complete insight to boast of. The slightest perusal of his Writings indicates to us a mind of wonderful depth and originality; but at the same time, of a nature or habit so abstruse, and altogether different from anything we ourselves have notice or experience of, that to penetrate fairly into its essential character, much more to picture it forth in visual distinctness, would be an extremely difficult task. Nay perhaps, if attempted by the means familiar to us, an impossible task: for Novalis belongs to that class of persons, who do not recognise the 'syllogistic method' as the chief organ for investigating truth, or feel themselves bound at all times to stop short where its light fails them. Many of his opinions he would despair of proving in the most patient Court of Law; and would remain well content that they should be disbelieved there. He much loved, and had assiduously studied, Jacob Böhme and other mystical writers; and was, openly enough, in good part a Mystic himself. Not indeed what we English, in common speech, call a Mystic; which means only a man whom we do not understand, and, in self-defence, reckon or would fain reckon a Dunce. Novalis was a Mystic, or had an affinity with Mysticism, in the primary and true meaning of that word, exemplified in some shape among our own Puritan Divines, and which at this day carries no opprobrium with it in Germany, or, except among certain more unimportant classes, in any other country. Nay, in this sense, great honours are recorded of Mysticism: Tasso, as may be seen in several of his prose writings, was professedly a Mystic; Dante is regarded as a chief man of that class.

Nevertheless, with all due tolerance or reverence for Novalis's Mysticism, the question still returns on us: How shall we

understand it, and in any measure shadow it forth? How may that spiritual condition, which by its own account is like pure Light, colourless, formless, infinite, be represented by mere Logic-Painters, mere Engravers we might say, who, except copper and burin, producing the most finite black-on-white, have no means of representing anything? Novalis himself has a line or two, and no more, expressly on Mysticism: 'What is Mysticism?' asks he. 'What is it that should come to be treated mystically? Religion, Love, Nature, Polity.—All select things (*alles Auserwählte*) have a reference to Mysticism. If all men were but one pair of lovers, the difference between Mysticism and Non-Mysticism were at an end.' In which little sentence, unhappily, our reader obtains no clearness; feels rather as if he were looking into darkness visible. We must entreat him, nevertheless, to keep up his spirits in this business; and above all, to assist us with his friendliest, cheerfulest endeavour: perhaps some faint far-off view of that same mysterious Mysticism may at length rise upon us.

To ourselves it somewhat illustrates the nature of Novalis's opinions, when we consider the then and present state of German metaphysical science generally; and the fact, stated above, that he gained his first notions on this subject from Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*. It is true, as Tieck remarks, 'he sought to open for himself a new path in Philosophy; to unite Philosophy with Religion;' and so diverged in some degree from his first instructor; or, as it more probably seemed to himself, prosecuted Fichte's scientific inquiry into its highest practical results. At all events, his metaphysical creed, so far as we can gather it from these Writings, appears everywhere in its essential lineaments synonymous with what little we understand of Fichte's, and might indeed, safely enough for our present purpose, be classed under the head of Kantism, or German metaphysics generally.

Now, without entering into the intricacies of German Philosophy, we need here only advert to the character of Idealism, on which it is everywhere founded, and which universally pervades it. In all German systems, since the time of Kant, it is the fundamental principle to deny the existence of Matter; or rather we should say, to believe it in a radically different sense from that in which the Scotch philosopher strives to demonstrate it, and the English Unphilosopher believes it without demonstration. To any of our readers, who has dipped never so slightly into metaphysical reading, this Idealism will

be no inconceivable thing. Indeed it is singular how widely diffused, and under what different aspects, we meet with it among the most dissimilar classes of mankind. Our Bishop Berkeley seems to have adopted it from religious inducements: Father Boscovich was led to a very cognate result, in his *Theoria Philosophiæ Naturalis*, from merely mathematical considerations. Of the ancient Pyrrho, or the modern Hume, we do not speak: but in the opposite end of the Earth, as Sir W. Jones informs us, a similar theory, of immemorial age, prevails among the theologians of Hindostan. Nay Professor Stewart has declared his opinion, that whoever at some time of his life has not entertained this theory, may reckon that he has yet shown no talent for metaphysical research.

Neither is it any argument against the Idealist to say that, since he denies the absolute existence of Matter, he ought in conscience to deny its relative existence; and plunge over precipices, and run himself through with swords, by way of recreation, since these, like all other material things, are only phantasms and spectra, and therefore of no consequence. If a man, corporeally taken, is but a phantasm and spectrum himself, all this will ultimately amount to much the same as it did before. Yet herein lies Dr. Reid's grand triumph over the Sceptics; which is as good as no triumph whatever. For as to the argument which he and his followers insist on, under all possible variety of figures, it amounts only to this very plain consideration, that 'men naturally, and without reasoning, *believe* in the existence of Matter;' and seems, philosophically speaking, not to have any value; nay the introduction of it into Philosophy may be considered as an act of suicide on the part of that science, the life and business of which, that of '*interpreting* Appearances,' is hereby at an end. Curious it is, moreover, to observe how these Commonsense Philosophers, men who brag chiefly of their irrefragable logic, and keep watch and ward, as if this were their special trade, against 'Mysticism' and 'Visionary Theories,' are themselves obliged to base their whole system on Mysticism, and a Theory; on Faith, in short, and that of a very comprehensive kind; the Faith, namely, either that man's Senses are themselves Divine, or that they afford not only an honest, but a *literal* representation of the workings of some Divinity. So true is it that for these men also, all knowledge of the visible rests on belief of the invisible, and derives its first meaning and certainty therefrom!

The Idealist, again, boasts that his Philosophy is Transcendental, that is, 'ascending *beyond* the senses;' which, he asserts, *all* Philosophy, properly so called, by its nature is and must be: and in this way he is led to various unexpected conclusions. To a Transcendentalist, Matter has an existence, but only as a Phenomenon: were *we* not there, neither would it be there; it is a mere Relation, or rather the result of a Relation between our living Souls and the great First Cause; and depends for its apparent qualities on *our* bodily and mental organs; having itself *no* intrinsic qualities; being, in the common sense of that word, Nothing. The tree is green and hard, not of its own natural virtue, but simply because my eye and my hand are fashioned so as to discern such and such appearances under such and such conditions. Nay, as an Idealist might say, even on the most popular grounds, *must* it not be so? Bring a sentient Being, with eyes a little different, with fingers ten times harder than mine; and to him that Thing which I call Tree shall be yellow and soft, as truly as to me it is green and hard. Form his Nervous-structure in all points the *reverse* of mine, and this same Tree shall not be combustible or heat-producing, but dissoluble and cold-producing, not high and convex, but deep and concave; shall simply have *all* properties exactly the reverse of those I attribute to it. There is, in fact, says Fichte, no Tree there; but only a Manifestation of Power from something which is *not I.* The same is true of material Nature at large, of the whole visible Universe, with all its movements, figures, accidents and qualities; all are Impressions produced on *me* by something *different from me.* This, we suppose, may be the foundation of what Fichte means by his far-famed *Ich* and *Nicht-Ich* (I and Not-I); words which, taking lodging (to use the Hudibrastic phrase) in certain 'heads that were to be let unfurnished,' occasioned a hollow echo, as of Laughter, from the empty Apartments; though the words are in themselves quite harmless, and may represent the basis of a metaphysical Philosophy as fitly as any other words.

But farther, and what is still stranger than such Idealism, according to these Kantean systems, the organs of the Mind too, what is called the Understanding, are of no less arbitrary, and, as it were accidental character than those of the Body. Time and Space themselves are not external but internal entities: they have no outward existence, there is no Time and no Space *out* of the mind; they are mere *forms* of man's spiritual being, *laws* under which his thinking nature is constituted to

act. This seems the hardest conclusion of all; but it is an important one with Kant; and is not given forth as a dogma; but carefully deduced in his *Critik der Reinen Vernunft* with great precision, and the strictest form of argument.

The reader would err widely who supposed that this Transcendental system of Metaphysics was a mere intellectual card-castle, or logical hocus-pocus, contrived from sheer idleness and for sheer idleness, being without any bearing on the practical interests of men. On the contrary, however false, or however true, it is the most serious in its purport of all Philosophies propounded in these latter centuries; has been taught chiefly by men of the loftiest and most earnest character; and does bear, with a direct and highly comprehensive influence, on the most vital interests of men. To say nothing of the views it opens in regard to the course and management of what is called Natural Science, we cannot but perceive that its effects, for such as adopt it, on Morals and Religion, must in these days be of almost boundless importance. To take only that last and seemingly strangest doctrine, for example, concerning Time and Space, we shall find that to the Kantist it yields, almost immediately, a remarkable result of this sort. If Time and Space have no absolute existence, no existence out of our minds, it removes a stumbling-block from the very threshold of our Theology. For on this ground, when we say that the Deity is omnipresent and eternal, that with Him it is a universal Here and Now, we say nothing wonderful; nothing but that He also created Time and Space, that Time and Space are not laws of His being, but only of ours. Nay to the Transcendentalist, clearly enough, the whole question of the origin and existence of Nature must be greatly simplified: the old hostility of Matter is at an end, for Matter is itself annihilated; and the black Spectre, Atheism, 'with all its sickly dews,' melts into nothingness forever. But farther, if it be, as Kant maintains, that the logical mechanism of the mind is arbitrary, so to speak, and might have been made different, it will follow, that all inductive conclusions, all conclusions of the Understanding, have only a relative truth, are true only for *us*, and *if* some other thing be true.

Thus far Hume and Kant go together, in this branch of the inquiry: but here occurs the most total, diametrical divergence between them. We allude to the recognition, by these Transcendentalists, of a higher faculty in man than Understanding; of Reason (*Vernunft*), the pure, ultimate light of our nature;

wherein, as they assert, lies the foundation of all Poetry, Virtue, Religion; things which are properly beyond the province of the Understanding, of which the Understanding *can* take no cognisance, except a false one. The elder Jacobi, who indeed is no Kantist, says once, we remember: 'It is the instinct of Understanding to *contradict* Reason.' Admitting this last distinction and subordination, supposing it scientifically demonstrated, what numberless and weightiest consequences would follow from it alone! These we must leave the considerate reader to deduce for himself; observing only farther, that the *Teologia Mistica*, so much venerated by Tasso in his philosophical writings; the 'Mysticism' alluded to by Novalis; and generally all true Christian Faith and Devotion, appear, so far as we can see, more or less included in this doctrine of the Transcendentalists; under their several shapes, the essence of them all being what is here designated by the name Reason, and set forth as the true sovereign of man's mind.

How deeply these and the like principles had impressed themselves on Novalis, we see more and more, the farther we study his Writings. Naturally a deep, religious, contemplative spirit; purified also, as we have seen, by harsh Affliction, and familiar in the 'Sanctuary of Sorrow,' he comes before us as the most ideal of all Idealists. For him the material Creation is but an Appearance, a typical shadow in which the Deity manifests himself to man. Not only has the unseen world a reality, but the only reality: the rest being not metaphorically, but literally and in scientific strictness, 'a show;' in the words of the Poet, *Schall und Rauch umnebelnd Himmels Gluth*, 'Sound and Smoke overclouding the Splendour of Heaven.' The Invisible World is near us: or rather it is here, in us and about us; were the fleshy coil removed from our Soul, the glories of the Unseen were even now around us; as the Ancients fabled of the Spheral Music. Thus, not in word only, but in truth and sober belief, he feels himself encompassed by the Godhead; feels in every thought, that 'in Him he lives, moves and has his being.'

On his Philosophic and Poetic procedure, all this has its natural influence. The aim of Novalis's whole Philosophy, we might say, is to preach and establish the Majesty of Reason, in that stricter sense; to conquer for it all provinces of human thought, and everywhere reduce its vassal, Understanding, into fealty, the right and only useful relation for it. Mighty tasks in this sort lay before himself; of which, in these Writings of

his, we trace only scattered indications. In fact, all that he has left is in the shape of Fragment; detached expositions and combinations, deep, brief glimpses: but such seems to be their general tendency. One character to be noted in many of these, often too obscure speculations, is his peculiar manner of viewing Nature: his habit, as it were, of considering Nature rather in the concrete, not analytically and as a divisible Aggregate, but as a self-subsistent universally connected Whole. This also is perhaps partly the fruit of his Idealism. 'He had formed the Plan,' we are informed, 'of a peculiar Encyclopedical Work, in which experiences and ideas from all the different sciences were mutually to elucidate, confirm and enforce each other.' In this work he had even made some progress. Many of the 'Thoughts,' and Short Aphoristic observations, here published, were intended for it; of such, apparently, it was, for the most part, to have consisted.

As a Poet, Novalis is no less Idealistic than as a Philosopher. His poems are breathings of a high devout soul, feeling always that here he has no home, but looking, as in clear vision, to a 'city that hath foundations.' He loves external Nature with a singular depth; nay, we might say, he reverences her, and holds unspeakable communings with her: for Nature is no longer dead, hostile Matter, but the veil and mysterious Garment of the Unseen; as it were, the Voice with which the Deity proclaims himself to man. These two qualities,—his pure religious temper, and heartfelt love of Nature,—bring him into true poetic relation both with the spiritual and the material World, and perhaps constitute his chief worth as a Poet; for which art he seems to have originally a genuine, but no exclusive or even very decided endowment.

His moral persuasions, as evinced in his Writings and Life, derive themselves naturally enough from the same source. It is the morality of a man, to whom the Earth and all its glories are in truth a vapour and a Dream, and the Beauty of Goodness the *only* real possession. Poetry, Virtue, Religion, which for other men have but, as it were, a traditionary and imagined existence, are for him the everlasting basis of the Universe; and all earthly acquirements, all with which Ambition, Hope, Fear, can tempt us to toil and sin, are in very deed but a picture of the brain, some reflex shadowed on the mirror of the Infinite, but in themselves air and nothingness. Thus, to live in that Light of Reason, to have, even while here and encircled with this Vision of Existence, our abode in that Eternal City,

is the highest and sole duty of man. These things Novalis figures to himself under various images: sometimes he seems to represent the Primeval essence of Being as Love; at other times, he speaks in emblems, of which it would be still more difficult to give a just account; which, therefore, at present, we shall not farther notice.

For now, with these far-off sketches of an exposition, the reader must hold himself ready to look into Novalis, for a little, with his own eyes. Whoever has honestly, and with attentive outlook, accompanied us along these wondrous outskirts of Idealism, may find himself as able to interpret Novalis as the majority of German readers would be; which, we think, is fair measure on our part. We shall not attempt any farther commentary; fearing that it might be too difficult and too unthankful a business. Our first extract is from the *Lehrlinge zu Sais* (Pupils at Sais), adverted to above. That 'Physical Romance,' which, for the rest, contains no story or indication of a story, but only poetised philosophical speeches, and the strangest shadowy allegorical allusions, and indeed is only carried the length of two Chapters, commences, without note of preparation, in this singular wise:

'I. THE PUPIL.—Men travel in manifold paths: whoso traces and compares these, will find strange Figures come to light; Figures which seem as if they belonged to that great Cipher-writing which one meets with everywhere, on wings of birds, shells of eggs, in clouds, in the snow, in crystals, in forms of rocks, in freezing waters, in the interior and exterior of mountains, of plants, animals, men, in the lights of the sky, in plates of glass and pitch when touched and struck on, in the filings round the magnet, and the singular conjunctures of Chance. In such Figures one anticipates the key to that wondrous Writing, the grammar of it; but this Anticipation will not fix itself into shape, and appears as if, after all, it would not become such a key for us. An *Alcahest* seems poured out over the senses of men. Only for a moment will their wishes, their thoughts thicken into form. Thus do their Anticipations arise; but after short whiles, all is again swimming vaguely before them, even as it did.

'From afar I heard say, that Unintelligibility was but the result of Unintelligence; that this sought what itself had, and so could find nowhere else; also that we did not understand Speech, because Speech did not, would not, understand itself; that the genuine Sanscrit spoke for the sake of speaking, because speaking was its pleasure and its nature.

'Not long thereafter, said one: No explanation is required for Holy Writing. Whoso speaks truly is full of eternal life, and wonderfully

related to genuine mysteries does his Writing appear to us, for it is a Concord from the Symphony of the Universe.

'Surely this voice meant our Teacher; for it is he that can collect the indications which lie scattered on all sides. A singular light kindles in his looks, when at length the high Rune lies before us, and he watches in our eyes whether the star has yet risen upon us, which is to make the Figure visible and intelligible. Does he see us sad, that the darkness will not withdraw? He consoles us, and promises the faithful assiduous seer better fortune in time. Often has he told us how, when he was a child, the impulse to employ his senses, to busy, to fill them, left him no rest. He looked at the stars, and imitated their courses and positions in the sand. Into the ocean of air he gazed incessantly; and never wearied contemplating its clearness, its movements, its clouds, its lights. He gathered stones, flowers, insects, of all sorts, and spread them out in manifold wise, in rows before him. To men and animals he paid heed; on the shore of the sea he sat, collected muscles. Over his own heart and his own thoughts he watched attentively. He knew not whither his longing was carrying him. As he grew up, he wandered far and wide; viewed other lands, other seas, new atmospheres, new rocks, unknown plants, animals, men; descended into caverns, saw how in courses and varying strata the edifice of the Earth was completed, and fashioned clay into strange figures of rocks. By and by, he came to find everywhere objects already known, but wonderfully mingled, united; and thus often extraordinary things came to shape in him. He soon became aware of combinations in all, of conjunctures, concurrences. Erelong, he no more saw anything alone.—In great variegated images, the perceptions of his senses crowded round him; he heard, saw, touched and thought at once. He rejoiced to bring strangers together. Now the stars were men, now men were stars, the stones animals, the clouds plants; he sported with powers and appearances; he knew where and how this and that was to be found, to be brought into action; and so himself struck over the strings, for tones and touches of his own.

'What has passed with him since then he does not disclose to us. He tells us that we ourselves, led on by him and our own desire, will discover what has passed with him. Many of us have withdrawn from him. They returned to their parents, and learned trades. Some have been sent out by him, we know not whither; he selected them. Of these, some have been but a short time there, others longer. One was still a child; scarcely was he come, when our Teacher was for passing him any more instruction. This child had large dark eyes with azure ground, his skin shone like lilies, and his locks like light little clouds when it is growing evening. His voice pierced through all our hearts; willingly would we have given him our flowers, stones, pens, all we had. He smiled with an infinite earnestness; and we had a strange delight beside him. One day he will come again, said our Teacher, and then our lessons end.—Along with him he sent one, for whom we had often

been sorry. Always sad he looked; he had been long years here; nothing would succeed with him; when we sought crystals or flowers, he seldom found. He saw dimly at a distance; to lay down variegated rows skilfully he had no power. He was so apt to break everything. Yet none had such eagerness, such pleasure in hearing and listening. At last,—it was before that Child came into our circle,—he all at once grew cheerful and expert. One day he had gone out sad; he did not return, and the night came on. We were very anxious for him; suddenly, as the morning dawned, we heard his voice in a neighbouring grove. He was singing a high, joyful song; we were all surprised; the Teacher looked to the East, such a look as I shall never see in him again. The singer soon came forth to us, and brought, with unspeakable blessedness on his face, a simple-looking little stone, of singular shape. The Teacher took it in his hand, and kissed him long; then looked at us with wet eyes, and laid this little stone on an empty space, which lay in the midst of other stones, just where, like radii, many rows of them met together.

'I shall in no time forget that moment. We felt as if we had had in our souls a clear passing glimpse into this wondrous World.'

In these strange Oriental delineations the judicious reader will suspect that more may be meant than meets the ear. But who this teacher at Sais is, whether the personified Intellect of Mankind; and who this bright-faced golden-locked Child (Reason, Religious Faith?), that was 'to come again,' to conclude these lessons; and that awkward unwearied Man (Understanding?), that 'was so apt to break everything,' we have no data for determining, and would not undertake to conjecture with any certainty. We subjoin a passage from the second chapter, or section, entitled '*Nature*,' which, if possible, is of a still more surprising character than the first. After speaking at some length on the primeval views Man seems to have formed with regard to the external Universe, or 'the manifold Objects of his Senses;' and how in those times his mind had a peculiar unity, and only by Practice divided itself into separate faculties, as by Practice it may yet farther do, 'our Pupil' proceeds to describe the conditions requisite in an inquirer into Nature, observing, in conclusion, with regard to this,—

'No one, of a surety, wanders farther from the mark than he who fancies to himself that he already understands this marvellous Kingdom, and can, in few words, fathom its constitution, and everywhere find the right path. To no one, who has broken off, and made himself an Island, will insight rise of itself, nor even without toilsome effort. Only to children, or childlike men, who know not what they do, can this

happen. Long, unwearied intercourse, free and wise Contemplation, attention to faint tokens and indications; an inward poet-life, practised senses, a simple and devout spirit: these are the essential requisites of a true Friend of Nature; without these no one can attain his wish. Not wise does it seem to attempt comprehending and understanding a Human World without full perfected Humanity. No talent must sleep; and if all are not alike active, all must be alert, and not oppressed and enervated. As we see a future Painter in the boy who fills every wall with sketches and variedly adds colour to figure; so we see a future Philosopher in him who restlessly traces and questions all natural things, pays heed to all, brings together whatever is remarkable, and rejoices when he has become master and possessor of a new phenomenon, of a new power and piece of knowledge.

'Now to Some it appears not at all worth while to follow out the endless divisions of Nature; and moreover a dangerous undertaking, without fruit and issue. As we can never reach, say they, the absolutely smallest grain of material bodies, never find their simplest compartments, since all magnitude loses itself, forwards and backwards, in infinitude; so likewise is it with the species of bodies and powers; here too one comes on new species, new combinations, new appearances, even to infinitude. These seem only to stop, continue they, when our diligence tires; and so it is spending precious time with idle contemplations and tedious enumerations; and this becomes at last a true delirium, a real vertigo over the horrid Deep. For Nature too remains, so far as we have yet come, ever a frightful Machine of Death: everywhere monstrous revolution, inexplicable vortices of movement; a kingdom or Devouring, of the maddest tyranny; a baleful Immense: the few light-points disclose but a so much the more appalling Night, and terrors of all sorts must palsy every observer. Like a saviour does Death stand by the hapless race of mankind; for without Death, the maddest were the happiest. And precisely this striving to fathom that gigantic Mechanism is already a draught towards the Deep, a commencing giddiness; for every excitement is an increasing whirl, which soon gains full mastery over its victim, and hurls him forward with it into the fearful Night. Here, say those lamenters, lies the crafty snare for man's understanding, which Nature everywhere seeks to annihilate as her greatest foe. Hail to that childlike ignorance and innocence of men, which kept them blind to the horrible perils that everywhere, like grim thunder-clouds, lay round their peaceful dwelling, and each moment were ready to rush down on them. Only inward disunion among the powers of Nature has preserved men hitherto; nevertheless, that great epoch cannot fail to arrive, when the whole family of mankind, by a grand universal Resolve, will snatch themselves from this sorrowful condition, from this frightful imprisonment; and by a voluntary Abdication of their terrestrial abode, redeem their race from this anguish, and seek refuge in a happier world, with their ancient Father. Thus might they end worthily; and prevent a necessary violent de-

struction; or a still more horrible degenerating into Beasts, by gradual dissolution of their thinking organs through Insanity. Intercourse with the powers of Nature, with animals, plants, rocks, storms and waves, must necessarily assimilate men to these objects; and this Assimilation, this Metamorphosis, and dissolution of the Divine and the Human, into ungovernable Forces, is even the Spirit of Nature, that frightfully voracious power: and is not all that we see even now a prey from Heaven, a great Ruin of former Glories, the Remains of a terrific Repast?

'Be it so, cry a more courageous Class; let our species maintain a stubborn, well-planned war of destruction with this same Nature, then. By slow poisons must we endeavour to subdue her. The Inquirer into Nature is a noble hero, who rushes into the open abyss for the deliverance of his fellow-citizens. Artists have already played her many a trick: do but continue in this course; get hold of the secret threads, and bring them to act against each other. Profit by these discords, that so in the end you may lead her, like that fire-breathing Bull, according to your pleasure. To you she must become obedient. Patience and Faith beseem the children of men. Distant Brothers are united with us for one object; the wheel of the Stars must become the cistern-wheel of our life, and then, by our slaves, we can build us a new Fairyland. With heartfelt triumph let us look at her devastations, her tumults; she is selling herself to us, and every violence she will pay by a heavy penalty. In the inspiring feeling of our Freedom, let us live and die; here gushes forth the stream, which will one day overflow and subdue her; in it let us bathe, and refresh ourselves for new exploits. Hither the rage of the Monster does not reach; one drop of Freedom is sufficient to cripple her forever, and forever set limits to her havoc.

'They are right, say Several; here, or nowhere, lies the talisman. By the well of Freedom we sit and look; it is the grand magic Mirror, where the whole Creation images itself, pure and clear; in it do the tender Spirits and Forms of all Nature bathe; all chambers we here behold unlocked. What need have we toilsomely to wander over the troublous World of visible things? The purer World lies even in us, in this Well. Here discloses itself the true meaning of the great, many-coloured, complected Scene; and if full of these sights we return into Nature, all is well known to us, with certainty we distinguish every shape. We need not to inquire long; a light Comparison, a few strokes in the sand, are enough to inform us. Thus, for us, is the whole a great Writing, to which we have the key; and nothing comes to us unexpected, for the course of the great Horologe is known to us beforehand. It is only we that enjoy Nature with full senses, because she does not frighten us from our senses; because no fever-dreams oppress us, and serene consciousness makes us calm and confiding.

'They are *not* right, says an earnest Man to these latter. Can they not recognise in Nature the true impress of their own Selves? It is even they that consume themselves in wild hostility to Thought. They

know not that this so-called Nature of theirs is a Sport of the Mind, a waste Fantasy of their Dream. Of a surety, it is for them a horrible Monster, a strange grotesque Shadow of their own Passions. The waking man looks without fear at this offspring of his lawless Imagination; for he knows that they are but vain Spectres of his weakness. He feels himself lord of the world: his *Me* hovers victorious over the Abyss; and will through Eternities hover aloft above that endless Vicissitude. Harmony is what his spirit strives to promulgate, to extend. He will even to infinitude grow more and more harmonious with himself and with his Creation; and at every step behold the all-efficiency of a high moral Order in the Universe, and what is purest of his *Me* come forth into brighter and brighter clearness. The significance of the World is Reason; for her sake is the World here; and when it is grown to be the arena of a childlike, expanding Reason, it will one day become the divine Image of her Activity, the scene of a genuine Church. Till then let man honour Nature as the Emblem of his own Spirit; the Emblem ennobling itself, along with him, to unlimited degrees. Let him, therefore, who would arrive at knowledge of Nature, train his moral sense, let him act and conceive in accordance with the noble Essence of his Soul; and as if of herself Nature will become open to him. Moral Action is that great and only Experiment, in which all riddles of the most manifold appearances explain themselves. Whoso understands it, and in rigid sequence of Thought can lay it open, is forever Master of Nature.'*

'The Pupil,' it is added, 'listens with alarm to these conflicting voices.' If such was the case in half-supernatural Sais, it may well be much more so in mere sublunary London. Here again, however, in regard to these vaporous lucubrations, we can only imitate Jean Paul's Quintus Fixlein, who, it is said, in his elaborate *Catalogue of German Errors of the Press*, 'states that important inferences are to be drawn from it, and advises the reader to draw them.' Perhaps these wonderful paragraphs, which look, at this distance, so like chasms filled with mere sluggish mist, might prove valleys, with a clear stream and soft pastures, were we near at hand. For one thing, either Novalis, with Tieck and Schlegel at his back, are men in a state of derangement; or there is more in Heaven and Earth than has been dreamt of in our Philosophy. We may add that, in our view, this last Speaker, the 'earnest Man,' seems evidently to be Fichte; the first two Classes look like some sceptical or atheistic brood, unacquainted with Bacon's *Novum Organum*, or having, the First class at least, almost no faith in it. That

* Bd. ii. s. 43-57.

theory of the human species ending by a universal simultaneous act of Suicide, will, to the more simple sort of readers, be new.

As farther and more directly illustrating Novalis's scientific views, we may here subjoin two short sketches, taken from another department of this Volume. To all who prosecute Philosophy, and take interest in its history and present aspects, they will not be without interest. The obscure parts of them are not perhaps unintelligible, but only obscure; which unluckily cannot, at all times, be helped in such cases:

'Common Logic is the Grammar of the higher Speech, that is, of Thought; it examines merely the *relations* of ideas to one another, the *Mechanics* of Thought, the pure Physiology of ideas. Now logical ideas stand related to one another, like words without thoughts. Logic occupies itself with the mere dead Body of the Science of Thinking.—Metaphysics, again, is the *Dynamics* of Thought; treats of the primary *Powers* of Thought; occupies itself with the mere Soul of the Science of Thinking. Metaphysical ideas stand related to one another, like thoughts without words. Men often wondered at the stubborn Incompletibility of these two Sciences; each followed its own business by itself; there was a want everywhere, nothing would suit rightly with either. From the very first, attempts were made to unite them, as everything about them indicated relationship; but every attempt failed; the one or the other Science still suffered in these attempts, and lost its essential character. We had to abide by metaphysical Logic, and logical Metaphysic, but neither of them was as it should be. With Physiology and Psychology, with Mechanics and Chemistry, it fared no better. In the latter half of this Century there arose, with us Germans, a more violent commotion than ever; the hostile masses towered themselves up against each other more fiercely than heretofore; the fermentation was extreme; there followed powerful explosions. And now some assert that a real Compenetration has somewhere or other taken place; that the germ of a union has arisen, which will grow by degrees, and assimilate all to one indivisible form: that this principle of Peace is pressing out irresistibly on all sides, and that erelong there will be but one Science and one Spirit, as one Prophet and one God.'—

'The rude, discursive Thinker is the Scholastic (Schoolman Logician). The true Scholastic is a mystical Subtlist; out of logical Atoms he builds his Universe; he annihilates all living Nature, to put an Artifice of Thoughts (*Gedankenkunststück*, literally Conjuror's-trick of Thoughts) in its room. His aim is an infinite Automaton. Opposite to him is the rude, intuitive Poet: this is a mystical Macrologist: he hates rules and fixed form; a wild, violent life reigns instead of it in Nature; all is animate, no law; wilfulness and wonder everywhere. He is merely dynamical. Thus does the Philosophic Spirit arise at first, in altogether

separate masses. In the *second* stage of culture these masses begin to come in contact, multifariously enough; and, as in the union of infinite Extremes, the Finite, the Limited arises, so here also arise "Eclectic Philosophers" without number; the time of misunderstanding begins. The most limited is, in this stage, the most important, the purest Philosopher of the second stage. This class occupies itself wholly with the actual, present world, in the strictest sense. The Philosophers of the first class look down with contempt on those of the second; say, they are a little of everything, and so nothing; hold their views as the results of weakness, as Inconsequentism. On the contrary, the second class, in their turn, pity the first; lay the blame on their visionary enthusiasm, which they say is absurd, even to insanity.

'If on the one hand the Scholastics and Alchemists seem to be utterly at variance, and the Eclectics on the other hand quite at one, yet, strictly examined, it is altogether the reverse. The former, in essentials, are indirectly of one opinion; namely, as regards the non-dependence and infinite character of Meditation, they both set out from the Absolute: whilst the Eclectic and limited sort are essentially at variance; and agree only in what is deduced. The former are infinite but uniform, the latter bounded but multiform; the former have genius, the latter talent; those have Ideas, these have knacks (*Handgriffe*); those are heads without hands, these are hands without heads. The *third* stage is for the Artist, who can be at once implement and genius. He finds that that primitive Separation in the absolute Philosophical Activities' (between the Scholastic, and the "rude, intuitive Poet") 'is a deeper-lying Separation in his own Nature; which Separation indicates, by its existence as such, the possibility of being adjusted, of being joined: he finds that, heterogeneous as these Activities are, there is yet a faculty in him of passing from the one to the other, of changing his *polarity* at will. He discovers in them, therefore, necessary members of his spirit; he observes that both must be united in some common Principle. He infers that Eclecticism is nothing but the imperfect defective employment of this Principle. It becomes——'

—But we need not struggle farther, wringing a significance out of these mysterious words: in delineating the genuine Transcendentalist, or 'Philosopher of the third stage,' properly speaking *the* Philosopher, Novalis ascends into regions whither few readers would follow him. It may be observed here that British Philosophy, tracing it from Duns Scotus to Dugald Stewart, has now gone through the first and second of these 'stages,' the Scholastic and the Eclectic, and in considerable honour. With our amiable Professor Stewart, than whom no man, not Cicero himself, was ever more entirely Eclectic, that second or Eclectic class may be considered as having terminated; and now Philosophy is at a stand among us, or rather there is now

no Philosophy visible in these Islands. It remains to be seen, whether we also are to have our 'third stage;' and how that new and highest 'class' will demean itself here. The French Philosophers seem busy studying Kant, and writing of him: but we rather imagine Novalis would pronounce them still only in the Eclectic stage. He says afterwards, that 'all Eclectics are essentially and at bottom sceptics; the more comprehensive, the more sceptical.'

These two passages have been extracted from a large series of *Fragments*, which, under the three divisions of Philosophical, Critical, Moral, occupy the greatest part of Volume Second. They are fractions, as we hinted above, of that grand 'encyclopedical work' which Novalis had planned. Friedrich Schlegel is said to be the selector of those published here. They come before us without note or comment; worded for the most part in very unusual phraseology; and without repeated and most patient investigation, seldom yield any significance, or rather we should say, often yield a false one. A few of the clearest we have selected for insertion: whether the reader will think them 'Pollen of Flowers,' or a baser kind of dust, we shall not predict. We give them in a miscellaneous shape; overlooking those classifications which, even in the text, are not and could not be very rigidly adhered to.

'Philosophy can bake no bread; but she can procure for us God, Freedom, Immortality. Which, then, is more practical, Philosophy or Economy?—

'Philosophy is properly Home-sickness; the wish to be everywhere at home.—

'We are near awakening when we dream that we dream.—

'The true philosophical Act is annihilation of self (*Selbsttödtung*); this is the real beginning of all Philosophy; all requisites for being a Disciple of Philosophy point hither. This Act alone corresponds to all the conditions and characteristics of transcendental conduct.—

'To become properly acquainted with a truth, we must first have disbelieved it, and disputed against it.—

'Man is the higher Sense of our Planet; the star which connects it with the upper world; the eye which it turns towards Heaven.—

'Life is a disease of the spirit; a working incited by Passion. Rest is peculiar to the spirit.—

'Our life is no Dream, but it may and will perhaps become one.—

'What is Nature? An encyclopedical, systematic Index or Plan of our Spirit. Why will we content us with the mere catalogue of our Treasures? Let us contemplate them ourselves, and in all ways elaborate and use them.—

'If our Bodily Life is a burning, our Spiritual Life is a being burnt, a Combustion (or, is precisely the inverse the case?); Death, therefore perhaps a Change of Capacity.—

'Sleep is for the inhabitants of Planets only. In another time, Man will sleep and wake continually at once. The greater part of our Body, of our Humanity itself, yet sleeps a deep sleep.—

'There is but one Temple in the World; and that is the Body of Man. Nothing is holier than this high form. Bending before men is a reverence done to this Revelation in the Flesh. We touch Heaven, when we lay our hands on a human body.—

'Man is a Sun; his Senses are the Planets.—

'Man has ever expressed some symbolical Philosophy of his Being in his Works and Conduct; he announces himself and his Gospel of Nature; he is the Messiah of Nature.—

'Plants are Children of the Earth; we are Children of the Æther. Our Lungs are properly our Root; we live, when we breathe; we begin our life with breathing.—

'Nature is an Æolian Harp, a musical instrument; whose tones again are keys to higher strings in us.—

'Every beloved object is the centre of a Paradise.—

'The first Man is the first Spirit-seer; all appears to him as Spirit. What are children, but first men? The fresh gaze of the Child is richer in significance than the forecasting of the most indubitable Seer.—

'It depends only on the weakness of our organs and of our self-excitement (*Selbstberührung*), that we do not see ourselves in a Fairy-world. All Fabulous Tales (*Mährchen*) are merely dreams of that home-world, which is everywhere and nowhere. The higher powers in us, which one day as Genies, shall fulfil our will,* are, for the present, Muses, which refresh us on our toilsome course with sweet remembrances.—

'Man consists in Truth. If he exposes Truth, he exposes himself. If he betrays Truth, he betrays himself. We speak not here of Lies, but of acting against Conviction.—

'A character is a completely fashioned will (*vollkommen gebildeter Wille*).—

'There is, properly speaking, no Misfortune in the world. Happiness and Misfortune stand in continual balance. Every Misfortune is, as it were, the obstruction of a stream, which, after overcoming this obstruction, but bursts through with the greater force.—

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* Novalis's ideas, on what has been called the 'perfectibility of man,' ground themselves on his peculiar views of the constitution of material and spiritual Nature, and are of the most original and extraordinary character. With our utmost effort, we should despair of communicating other than a quite false notion of them. He asks, for instance, with scientific gravity: Whether any one, that recollects the first kind glance of her he loved, can doubt the possibility of *Magic?*

'The ideal of Morality has no more dangerous rival than the ideal of highest Strength, of most powerful life; which also has been named (very falsely as it was there meant) the ideal of poetic greatness. It is the maximum of the savage; and has, in these times, gained, precisely among the greatest weaklings, very many proselytes. By this ideal, man becomes a Beast-Spirit, a Mixture; whose brutal wit has, for weaklings, a brutal power of attraction.—

'The spirit of Poesy is the morning light, which makes the Statue of Memnon sound.—

'The division of Philosopher and Poet is only apparent, and to the disadvantage of both. It is a sign of disease, and of a sickly constitution.—

'The true Poet is all-knowing; he is an actual world in miniature.—

'Klopstock's works appear, for the most part, free Translations of an unknown Poet, by a very talented but unpoetical Philologist.—

'Goethe is an altogether practical Poet. He is in his works what the English are in their wares: highly simple, neat, convenient and durable. He has done in German Literature what Wedgwood did in English Manufacture. He has, like the English, a natural turn for Economy, and a noble Taste acquired by Understanding. Both these are very compatible, and have a near affinity in the chemical sense. * * —*Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* may be called throughout prosaic and modern. The Romantic sinks to ruin, the Poesy of Nature, the Wonderful. The Book treats merely of common worldly things: Nature and Mysticism are altogether forgotten. It is a poetised civic and household History; the Marvellous is expressly treated therein as imagination and enthusiasm. Artistic Atheism is the spirit of the Book. * * * It is properly a *Candide*, directed against Poetry: the Book is highly unpoetical in respect of spirit, poetical as the dress and body of it are. * * * The introduction of Shakspeare has almost a tragic effect. The hero retards the triumph of the Gospel of Economy; and economical Nature is finally the true and only remaining one.—

'When we speak of the aim and Art observable in Shakspeare's works, we must not forget that Art belongs to Nature; that it is, so to speak, self-viewing, self-imitating, self-fashioning Nature. The Art of a well-developed genius is far different from the Artfulness of the Understanding, of the merely reasoning mind. Shakspeare was no calculator, no learned thinker; he was a mighty, many-gifted soul, whose feelings and works, like products of Nature, bear the stamp of the same spirit; and in which the last and deepest of observers will still find new harmonies with the infinite structure of the Universe; concurrences with later ideas, affinities with the higher powers and senses of man. They are emblematic, have many meanings, are simple and inexhaustible, like products of Nature; and nothing more unsuitable could be said of them than that they are works of Art, in that narrow mechanical acceptation of the word.'

The reader understands that we offer these specimens not as the best to be found in Novalis's *Fragments*, but simply as the most intelligible. Far stranger and deeper things there are, could we hope to make them in the smallest degree understood. But in examining and reëxamining many of his *Fragments*, we find ourselves carried into more complex, more subtle regions of thought than any we are elsewhere acquainted with: here we cannot always find our own latitude and longitude, sometimes not even approximate to finding them; much less teach others such a secret.

What has been already quoted may afford some knowledge of Novalis, in the characters of Philosopher and Critic: there is one other aspect under which it would be still more curious to view and exhibit him, but still more difficult,—we mean that of his Religion. Novalis nowhere specially records his creed, in these Writings: he many times expresses, or implies, a zealous, heartfelt belief in the Christian system; yet with such adjuncts and coexisting persuasions, as to us might seem rather surprising. One or two more of these his Aphorisms, relative to this subject, we shall cite, as likely to be better than any description of ours. The whole Essay at the end of Volume First, entitled *Die Christenheit oder Europa* (Christianity or Europe) is also well worthy of study, in this as in many other points of view.

'Religion contains infinite sadness. If we are to love God, he must be in distress (*hülfsbedürftig*, help-needing). In how far is this condition answered in Christianity?—

'Spinoza is a God-intoxicated man (*Gott-trunkener Mensch*).—

'Is the Devil, as Father of Lies, himself but a necessary Illusion?—

'The Catholic Religion is to a certain extent applied Christianity. Fichte's Philosophy too is perhaps applied Christianity.—

'Can Miracles work Conviction? Or is not real Conviction, this highest function of our soul and personality, the only true God-announcing Miracle?

'The Christian Religion is especially remarkable, moreover, as it so decidedly lays claim to mere good-will in Man, to his essential Temper, and values this independently of all Culture and Manifestation. It stands in opposition to Science and to Art, and *properly to Enjoyment.**

'Its origin is with the common people. It inspires the great majority of the *limited* in this Earth.

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* Italics also in the text.

'It is the Light that begins to shine in the Darkness.

'It is the root of *all Democracy*, the highest Fact in the Rights of Man (*die höchste Thatsache der Popularität*).

'Its unpoetical exterior, its resemblance to a modern family-picture, *seems only to be lent it.**

'Martyrs are spiritual heroes. Christ was the greatest martyr of our species; through him has martyrdom become infinitely significant and holy.—

'The Bible begins nobly, with Paradise, the symbol of youth; and concludes with the Eternal Kingdom, the Holy City. Its two main divisions, also, are genuine grand-historical divisions (*ächt gross-historisch*). For in every grand-historical compartment (*Glied*), the grand history must lie, as it were, symbolically re-created (*verjüngt*, made young again). The beginning of the New Testament is the second higher Fall (the Atonement of the Fall), and the commencement of the new Period. The history of every individual man should be a Bible. Christ is a new Adam. A Bible is the highest problem of Authorship.—

'As yet there is no Religion. You must first make a Seminary (*Bildungs-schule*) of genuine Religion. Think ye that there is Religion? Religion has to be made and produced (*gemacht und hervorgebracht*) by the union of a number of persons.'

Hitherto our readers have seen nothing of Novalis in his character of Poet, properly so called; the *Pupils at Sais* being fully more of a scientific than poetic nature. As hinted above, we do not account his gifts in this latter province as of the first, or even of a high order; unless, indeed, it be true, as he himself maintains, that 'the distinction of Poet and Philosopher is apparent only, and to the injury of both.' In his professedly poetical compositions there is an indubitable prolixity, a degree of languor, not weakness but sluggishness; the meaning is too much diluted; and diluted, we might say, not in a rich, lively, varying music, as we find in Tieck, for example; but rather in a low-voiced, not unmelodious monotony, the deep hum of which is broken only at rare intervals, though sometimes by tones of purest and almost spiritual softness. We here allude chiefly to his unmetrical pieces, his prose fictions: indeed the metrical are few in number; for the most part, on religious subjects; and in spite of a decided truthfulness both in feeling and word, seem to bespeak no great skill or practice in that form of composition. In his prose style he may be accounted happier; he aims in general at simplicity, and a certain familiar expressive-

* Italics also in the text.

ness; here and there, in his more elaborate passages, especially in his *Hymns to the Night*, he has reminded us of Herder.

These *Hymns to the Night*, it will be remembered, were written shortly after the death of his mistress: in that period of deep sorrow, or rather of holy deliverance from sorrow. Novalis himself regarded them as his most finished productions. They are of a strange, veiled, almost enigmatical character; nevertheless, more deeply examined, they appear nowise without true poetic worth; there is a vastness, an immensity of idea; a still solemnity reigns in them, a solitude almost as of extinct worlds. Here and there too some light-beam visits us in the void deep; and we cast a glance, clear and wondrous, into the secrets of that mysterious soul. A full commentary on the *Hymns to the Night* would be an exposition of Novalis's whole theological and moral creed; for it lies recorded there, though symbolically, and in lyric, not in didactic language. We have translated the Third, as the shortest and simplest; imitating its light, half-measured style, above all deciphering its vague deep-laid sense, as accurately as we could. By the word 'Night,' it will be seen, Novalis means much more than the common opposite of Day. 'Light' seems, in these poems, to shadow forth our terrestrial life; Night the primeval and celestial life:—

'Once when I was shedding bitter tears, when dissolved in pain my Hope had melted away, and I stood solitary by the grave that in its dark narrow space concealed the Form of my life; solitary as no other had been; chased by unutterable anguish; powerless; one thought and that of misery;—here now as I looked round for help; forward could not go, nor backward, but clung to a transient extinguished Life with unutterable longing;—lo, from the azure distance, down from the heights of my old Blessedness, came a chill breath of Dusk, and suddenly the band of Birth, the fetter of Life was snapped asunder. Vanishes the Glory of Earth, and with it my Lamenting: rushes together the infinite Sadness into a new unfathomable World: thou Night's-inspiration, Slumber of Heaven, camest over me; the scene rose gently aloft; over the scene hovered my enfranchised new-born spirit; to a cloud of dust that grave changed itself; through the cloud I beheld the transfigured features of my Beloved. In her eyes lay Eternity; I clasped her hand, and my tears became a glittering indissoluble chain. Centuries of Ages moved away into the distance, like thunder-clouds. On her neck I wept, for this new life, enrapturing tears.—It was my first, only Dream; and ever since then do I feel this changeless everlasting faith in the Heaven of Night, and its Sun my Beloved.'

What degree of critical satisfaction, what insight into the grand crisis of Novalis's spiritual history, which seems to be here shadowed forth, our readers may derive from this Third *Hymn to the Night*, we shall not pretend to conjecture. Meanwhile, it were giving them a false impression of the Poet, did we leave him here; exhibited only under his more mystic aspects: as if his Poetry were exclusively a thing of Allegory, dwelling amid Darkness and Vacuity, far from all paths of ordinary mortals and their thoughts. Novalis can write in the most common style, as well as in this most uncommon one; and there too not without originality. By far the greater part of his First Volume is occupied with a Romance, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, written, so far as it goes, much in the everyday manner; we have adverted the less to it, because we nowise reckoned it among his most remarkable compositions. Like many of the others, it has been left as a Fragment; nay, from the account Tieck gives of its ulterior plan, and how from the solid prose world of the First part, this 'Apotheosis of Poetry' was to pass, in the Second, into a mythical, fairy and quite fantastic world, critics have doubted whether, strictly speaking, it *could* have been completed. From this work we select two passages, as specimens of Novalis's manner in the more common style of composition; premising, which in this one instance we are entitled to do, that whatever excellence they may have will be universally appreciable. The first is the introduction to the whole Narrative, as it were the text of the whole; the 'Blue Flower' there spoken of being Poetry, the real object, passion and vocation of young Heinrich, which, through manifold adventures, exertions and sufferings, he is to seek and find. His history commences thus:

'The old people were already asleep; the clock was beating its monotonous tick on the wall; the wind blustered over the rattling windows; by turns, the chamber was lighted by the sheen of the moon. The young man lay restless in his bed; and thought of the stranger and his stories. "Not the treasures is it," said he to himself, "that have awakened in me so unspeakable a desire; far from me is all covetousness; but the Blue Flower is what I long to behold. It lies incessantly in my heart, and I can think and fancy of nothing else. Never did I feel so before: it is as if, till now, I had been dreaming, or as if sleep had carried me into another world; for in the world I used to live in, who troubled himself about flowers? Such wild passion for a Flower was never heard of there. But whence could that stranger have come? None of us ever saw such a man; yet I

know not how I alone was so caught with his discourse: the rest heard the very same, yet none seems to mind it. And then that I cannot even speak of my strange condition! I feel such rapturous contentment; and only then when I have not the Flower rightly before my eyes, does so deep, heartfelt an eagerness come over me: these things no one will or can believe. I could fancy I were mad, if I did not see, did not think with such perfect clearness; since that day, all is far better known to me. I have heard tell of ancient times; how animals and trees and rocks used to speak with men. This is even my feeling: as if they were on the point of breaking out, and I could see in them, what they wished to say to me. There must be many a word which I know not; did I know more, I could better comprehend these matters. Once I liked dancing; now I had rather think to the music."—The young man lost himself, by degrees, in sweet fancies, and fell asleep. He dreamed first of immeasurable distances, and wild unknown regions. He wandered over seas with incredible speed; strange animals he saw; he lived with many varieties of men, now in war, in wild tumult, now in peaceful huts. He was taken captive, and fell into the lowest wretchedness. All emotions rose to a height as yet unknown to him. He lived through an infinitely variegated life; died and came back; loved to the highest passion, and then again was forever parted from his loved one.

'At length towards morning, as the dawn broke up without, his spirit also grew stiller, the images grew clearer and more permanent. It seemed to him he was walking alone in a dark wood. Only here and there did day glimmer through the green net. Ere long he came to a rocky chasm, which mounted upwards. He had to climb over many crags, which some former stream had rolled down. The higher he came, the lighter grew the wood. At last he arrived at a little meadow, which lay on the declivity of the mountain. Beyond the meadow rose a high cliff, at the foot of which he observed an opening, that seemed to be the entrance of a passage hewn in the rock. The passage led him easily on, for some time, to a great subterranean expanse, out of which from afar a bright gleam was visible. On entering, he perceived a strong beam of light, which sprang as if from a fountain to the roof of the cave, and sprayed itself into innumerable sparks, which collected below in a great basin: the beam glanced like kindled gold: not the faintest noise was to be heard, a sacred silence encircled the glorious sight. He approached the basin, which waved and quivered with infinite hues. The walls of the cave were coated with this fluid, which was not hot but cool, and on the walls threw out a faint bluish light. He dipt his hand in the basin, and wetted his lips. It was as if the breath of a spirit went through him; and he felt himself in his inmost heart strengthened and refreshed. An irresistible desire seized him to bathe; he undressed himself and stept into the basin. He felt as if a sunset cloud were floating round him; a heavenly emotion streamed over his soul; in deep pleasure innumer-

able thoughts strove to blend within him; new, unseen images arose, which also melted together, and became visible beings around him; and every wave of that lovely element pressed itself on him like a soft bosom. The flood seemed a Spirit of Beauty, which from moment to moment was taking form round the youth.

'Intoxicated with rapture, and yet conscious of every impression, he floated softly down that glittering stream, which flowed out from the basin into the rocks. A sort of sweet slumber fell upon him, in which he dreamed indescribable adventures, and out of which a new light awoke him. He found himself on a soft sward at the margin of a spring, which welled out into the air, and seemed to dissipate itself there. Dark-blue rocks, with many-coloured veins, rose at some distance; the daylight which encircled him was clearer and milder than the common; the sky was black-blue, and altogether pure. But what attracted him infinitely most was a high, light-blue Flower, which stood close by the spring, touching it with its broad glittering leaves. Round it stood innumerable flowers of all colours, and the sweetest perfume filled the air. He saw nothing but the Blue Flower; and gazed on it long with nameless tenderness. At last he was for approaching, when all at once it began to move and change; the leaves grew more resplendent, and clasped themselves round the waxing stem; the Flower bent itself towards him; and the petals showed like a blue spreading ruff, in which hovered a lovely face. His sweet astonishment at this transformation was increasing,—when suddenly his mother's voice awoke him, and he found himself in the house of his parents, which the morning sun was already gilding.'

Our next and last extract is likewise of a dream. Young Heinrich with his mother travels a long journey to see his grandfather at Augsburg; converses, on the way, with merchants, miners and red-cross warriors (for it is in the time of the Crusades); and soon after his arrival falls immeasurably in love with Matilda, the Poet Klingsohr's daughter, whose face was that fairest one he had seen in his old vision of the Blue Flower. Matilda, it would appear, is to be taken from him by death (as Sophie was from Novalis): meanwhile, dreading no such event, Heinrich abandons himself with full heart to his new emotions:

'He went to the window. The choir of the Stars stood in the deep heaven; and in the east a white gleam announced the coming day.

'Full of rapture, Heinrich exclaimed: "You, ye everlasting Stars, ye silent wanderers, I call you to witness my sacred oath. For Matilda will I live, and eternal faith shall unite my heart and hers. For me too the morn of an everlasting day is dawning. The night is by: to the rising Sun, I kindle myself as a sacrifice that will never be extinguished."

'Heinrich was heated; and not till late, towards morning, did he fall asleep. In strange dreams the thoughts of his soul embodied themselves. A deep-blue river gleamed from the plain. On its smooth surface floated a bark; Matilda was sitting there, and steering. She was adorned with garlands; was singing a simple Song, and looking over to him with fond sadness. His bosom was full of anxiety. He knew not why. The sky was clear, the stream calm. Her heavenly countenance was mirrored in the waves. All at once the bark began to whirl. He called earnestly to her. She smiled, and laid down her oar in the boat, which continued whirling. An unspeakable terror took hold of him. He dashed into the stream; but he could not get forward; the water carried him. She beckoned, she seemed as if she wished to say something to him; the bark was filling with water; yet she smiled with unspeakable affection, and looked cheerfully into the vortex. All at once it drew her in. A faint breath rippled over the stream, which flowed on as calm and glittering as before. His horrid agony robbed him of consciousness. His heart ceased beating. On returning to himself, he was again on dry land. It seemed as if he had floated far. It was a strange region. He knew not what had passed with him. His heart was gone. Unthinking he walked deeper into the country. He felt inexpressibly weary. A little well gushed from a hill; it sounded like perfect bells. With his hand he lifted some drops, and wetted his parched lips. Like a sick dream, lay the frightful event behind him. Farther and farther he walked; flowers and trees spoke to him. He felt so well, so at home in the scene. Then he heard that simple Song again. He ran after the sounds. Suddenly some one held him by the clothes. "Dear Henry," cried a well-known voice. He looked round, and Matilda clasped him in her arms. "Why didst thou run from me, dear heart?" said she, breathing deep: "I could scarcely overtake thee." Heinrich wept. He pressed her to him. "Where is the river?" cried he in tears.—"Seest thou not its blue waves above us?" He looked up, and the blue river was flowing softly over their heads. "Where are we, dear Matilda?"—"With our Fathers."—"Shall we stay together?"—"Forever," answered she, pressing her lips to his, and so clasping him that she could not again quit hold. She put a wondrous secret Word in his mouth, and it pierced through all his being. He was about to repeat it, when his Grandfather called, and he awoke. He would have given his life to remember that Word.'

This image of Death, and of the River being the Sky in that other and eternal country, seems to us a fine and touching one: there is in it a trace of that simple sublimity, that soft still pathos, which are characteristics of Novalis, and doubtless the highest of his specially poetic gifts.

But on these, and what other gifts and deficiencies pertain

to him, we can no farther insist: for now, after such multifarious quotations, and more or less stinted commentaries, we must consider our little enterprise in respect of Novalis to have reached its limits; to be, if not completed, concluded. Our reader has heard him largely; on a great variety of topics, selected and exhibited here in such manner as seemed the fittest for our object, and with a true wish on our part, that what little judgment was in the meanwhile to be formed of such a man might be a fair and honest one. Some of the passages we have translated will appear obscure; others, we hope, are not without symptoms of a wise and deep meaning; the rest may excite wonder, which wonder again it will depend on each reader for himself, whether he turn to right account or to wrong account, whether he entertain as the parent of Knowledge, or as the daughter of Ignorance. For the great body of readers, we are aware, there can be little profit in Novalis, who rather employs our time than helps us to kill it; for such any farther study of him would be unadvisable. To others again, who prize Truth as the end of all reading, especially to that class who cultivate moral science as the development of purest and highest Truth, we can recommend the perusal and reperusal of Novalis with almost perfect confidence. If they feel, with us, that the most profitable employment any book can give them, is to study honestly some earnest, deep-minded, truth-loving Man, to work their way into his manner of thought, till they see the world with his eyes, feels as he felt and judge as he judged, neither believing nor denying, till they can in some measure so feel and judge,—then we may assert that few books known to us are more worthy of their attention than this. They will find it, if we mistake not, an unfathomed mine of philosophical ideas, where the keenest intellect may have occupation enough; and in such occupation, without looking farther, reward enough. All this, if the reader proceed on candid principles; if not, it will be all otherwise. To no man, so much as to Novalis is that famous motto applicable:

Leser, wie gefall' ich Dir?
Leser, wie gefällst Du Mir?

Reader, how likest thou me?
Reader, how like I thee?

For the rest, it were but a false proceeding did we attempt any formal character of Novalis in this place; did we pretend

with such means as ours to reduce that extraordinary nature under common formularies; and in few words sum-up the net total of his worth and worthlessness. We have repeatedly expressed our own imperfect knowledge of the matter, and our entire despair of bringing even an approximate picture of it before readers so foreign to him. The kind words, 'amiable enthusiast,' 'poetic dreamer,' or the unkind ones, 'German mystic,' 'crackbrained rhapsodist,' are easily spoken and written; but would avail little in this instance. If we are not altogether mistaken, Novalis cannot be ranged under any one of these noted categories; but belongs to a higher and much less known one, the significance of which is perhaps also worth studying, at all events will not till after long study become clear to us.

Meanwhile let the reader accept some vague impressions of ours on this subject, since we have no fixed judgment to offer him. We might say, that the chief excellence we have remarked in Novalis is his to us truly wonderful subtlety of intellect; his power of intense abstraction, of pursuing the deepest and most evanescent ideas through their thousand complexities, as it were, with lynx vision, and to the very limits of human Thought. He was well skilled in mathematics, and, as we can easily believe, fond of that science; but his is a far finer species of endowment than any required in mathematics, where the mind, from the very beginning of *Euclid* to the end of *Laplace*, is assisted with visible symbols, with safe *implements* for thinking; nay, at least in what is called the higher mathematics, has often little more than a mechanical superintendence to exercise over these. This power of abstract meditation, when it is so sure and clear as we sometimes find it with Novalis, is a much higher and rarer one; its element is not mathematics, but that *Mathesis*, of which it has been said many a Great Calculist has not even a notion. In this power, truly, so far as logical and not moral power is concerned, lies the summary of all Philosophic talent: which talent, accordingly, we imagine Novalis to have possessed in a very high degree; in a higher degree than almost any other modern writer we have met with.

His chief fault, again, figures itself to us as a certain undue softness, a want of rapid energy; something which we might term *passiveness* extending both over his mind and his character. There is a tenderness in Novalis, a purity, a clearness, almost as of a woman; but he has not, at least not at all in that degree, the emphasis and resolute force of a man. Thus, in his poetical delineations, as we complained above, he is too diluted

and diffuse; not verbose properly; not so much abounding in superfluous words as in superfluous circumstances, which indeed is but a degree better. In his philosophical speculations, we feel as if, under a different form, the same fault were now and then manifested. Here again, he seems to us, in one sense, too languid, too passive. He *sits*, we might say, among the rich, fine, thousandfold combinations, which his mind almost of itself presents him; but, perhaps, he shows too little activity in the process, is too lax in separating the true from the doubtful, is not even at the trouble to express his truth with any laborious accuracy. With his stillness, with his deep love of Nature, his mild, lofty, spiritual tone of contemplation, he comes before us in a sort of Asiatic character, almost like our ideal of some antique Gymnosophist, and with the weakness as well as the strength of an Oriental. However, it should be remembered that his works both poetical and philosophical, as we now see them, appear under many disadvantages; altogether immature, and not as doctrines and delineations, but as the rude draught of such; in which, had they been completed, much was to have changed its shape, and this fault, with many others, might have disappeared. It may be, therefore, that this is only a superficial fault, or even only the appearance of a fault, and has its origin in these circumstances, and in our imperfect understanding of him. In personal and bodily habits, at least, Novalis appears to have been the opposite of inert; we hear expressly of his quickness and vehemence of movement.

In regard to the character of his genius, or rather perhaps of his literary significance, and the form under which he displayed his genius, Tieck thinks he may be likened to Dante. 'For him,' says he, 'it had become the most natural disposition to regard the commonest and nearest as a wonder, and the strange, the supernatural as something common; men's every-day life itself lay round him like a wondrous fable, and those regions which the most dream of or doubt of as of a thing distant, incomprehensible, were for him a beloved home. Thus did he, uncorrupted by examples, find out for himself a new method of delineation: and, in his multiplicity of meaning; in his view of Love, and his belief in Love, as at once his Instructor, his Wisdom, his Religion; in this, too, that a single grand incident of life, and one deep sorrow and bereavement grew to be the essence of his Poetry and Contemplation,—he, alone among the moderns, resembles the lofty Dante; and sings us, like him, an unfathomable mystic song, far different from that of many

imitators, who think to put on mysticism and put it off, like a piece of dress.' Considering the tendency of his poetic endeavours, as well as the general spirit of his philosophy, this flattering comparison may turn out to be better founded than at first sight it seems to be. Nevertheless, were we required to illustrate Novalis in this way, which at all times must be a very loose one, we should incline rather to call him the German Pascal than the German Dante. Between Pascal and Novalis, a lover of such analogies might trace not a few points of resemblance. Both are of the purest, most affectionate moral nature; both of a high, fine, discursive intellect; both are mathematicians and naturalists, yet occupy themselves chiefly with Religion; nay, the best writings of both are left in the shape of 'Thoughts,' materials of a grand scheme, which each of them, with the views peculiar to his age, had planned, we may say, for the furtherance of Religion, and which neither of them lived to execute. Nor in all this would it fail to be carefully remarked, that Novalis was not the French but the *German* Pascal; and from the intellectual habits of the one and the other, many national contrasts and conclusions might be drawn; which we leave to those that have a taste for such parallels.

We have thus endeavoured to communicate some views not of what is vulgarly called, but of what *is* a German Mystic; to afford English readers a few glimpses into his actual household establishment, and show them by their own inspection how he lives and works. We have done it, moreover, not in the style of derision, which would have been so easy, but in that of serious inquiry, which seemed so much more profitable. For this we anticipate not censure, but thanks from our readers. Mysticism, whatever it may be, should, like other actually existing things, be understood in well-informed minds. We have observed, indeed, that the old-established laugh on this subject has been getting rather hollow of late; and seems as if erelong it would in a great measure die away. It appears to us that, in England, there is a distinct spirit of tolerant and sober investigation abroad in regard to this and other kindred matters; a persuasion, fast spreading wider and wider, that the plummet of French or Scotch Logic, excellent, nay indispensable as it is for surveying all coasts and harbours, will absolutely not sound the deep-seas of human Inquiry; and that many a Voltaire and Hume, well-gifted and highly meritorious men, were far wrong in reckoning that when their six-hundred fathoms were out, they had reached the bottom, which, as in

the Atlantic, may lie unknown miles lower. Six-hundred fathoms is the longest, and a most valuable nautical line: but many men sound with six and fewer fathoms, and arrive at precisely the same conclusion.

'The day will come,' said Lichtenberg, in bitter irony, 'when the belief in God will be like that in nursery Spectres;' or, as Jean Paul has it, 'Of the World will be made a World-Machine, of the Æther a Gas, of God a Force, and of the Second World —a Coffin.' We rather think, such a day will *not* come. At all events, while the battle is still waging, and that Coffin-and-Gas Philosophy has not yet secured itself with tithes and penal statutes, let there be free scope for Mysticism, or whatever else honestly opposes it. A fair field and no favour, and the right *will* prosper! 'Our present time,' says Jean Paul elsewhere, 'is indeed a criticising and critical time, hovering betwixt the wish and the inability to believe; a chaos of conflicting times: but even a chaotic world must have its centre, and revolution round that centre; there *is* no pure entire Confusion, but all such presupposes its opposite, before it can begin.'

JEAN PAUL FRIEDRICH RICHTER.*

[1830.]

It is some six years since the name 'Jean Paul Friedrich Richter' was first printed with English types; and some six-and-forty since it has stood emblazoned and illuminated on all true literary Indicators among the Germans; a fact which, if we consider the history of many a Kotzebue and Chateaubriand, within that period, may confirm the old doctrine, that the best celebrity does not always spread the fastest; but rather, quite contrariwise, that as blown bladders are far more easily carried than metallic masses, though gold ones, of equal bulk, so the Playwright, Poetaster, Philosophe, will often pass triumphantly beyond seas, while the Poet and Philosopher abide quietly at home. Such is the order of Nature: a Spurzheim flies from Vienna to Paris and London within the year; a Kant, slowly advancing, may perhaps reach us from Königsberg within the century: Newton, merely to cross the narrow Channel, required fifty years; Shakspeare, again, three times as many. It is true, there are examples of an opposite sort; now and then, by some rare chance, a Goethe, a Cervantes, will occur in literature, and Kings may laugh over *Don Quixote* while it is yet unfinished, and scenes from *Werter* be painted on Chinese tea-cups while the author is still a stripling. These, however, are not the rule, but the exceptions; nay, rightly interpreted, the exceptions which confirm it. In general, that sudden tumultuous popularity comes more from partial delirium on both sides than from clear insight; and is of evil omen to all concerned with it. How many loud Bacchus-festivals of this sort have we seen prove to

* Foreign Review, No. 9.—*Wahrheit aus Jean Pauls Leben* (Biography of Jean Paul). 1stes, 2tes, 3tes Bändchen. Breslau, 1826, '27, '28.

be pseudo-Bacchanalia, and end in directly the inverse of Orgies! Drawn by his team of lions, the jolly god advances as a real god, with all his thyrsi, cymbals, phallophori and Mænadic women; the air, the earth is giddy with their clangour, their Evohes: but, alas, in a little while, the lion-team shows long ears, and becomes too clearly an ass-team in lion-skins; the Mænads wheel round in amazement; and then the jolly god, dragged from his chariot, is trodden into the kennels as a drunk mortal.

That no such apotheosis was appointed for Richter in his own country, or is now to be anticipated in any other, we cannot but regard as a natural and nowise unfortunate circumstance. What divinity lies in him requires a calmer worship, and from quite another class of worshippers. Neither, in spite of that forty-years abeyance, shall we accuse England of any uncommon blindness towards him: nay, taking all things into account, we should rather consider his actual footing among us as evincing not only an increased rapidity in literary intercourse, but an intrinsic improvement in the manner and objects of it. Our feeling of foreign excellence, we hope, must be becoming truer; our Insular taste must be opening more and more into a European one. For Richter is by no means a man whose merits, like his singularities, force themselves on the general eye; indeed, without great patience, and some considerable catholicism of disposition, no reader is likely to prosper much with him. He has a fine, high, altogether unusual talent; and a manner of expressing it perhaps still more unusual. He is a Humorist heartily and throughout; not only in low provinces of thought, where this is more common, but in the loftiest provinces, where it is well-nigh unexampled; and thus, in wild sport, 'playing bowls with the sun and moon,' he fashions the strangest ideal world, which at first glance looks no better than a chaos.

The Germans themselves find much to bear with in him; and for readers of any other nation, he is involved in almost boundless complexity; a mighty maze, indeed, but in which the plan, or traces of a plan, are nowhere visible. Far from appreciating and appropriating the spirit of his writings, foreigners find it in the highest degree difficult to seize their grammatical meaning. Probably there is not in any modern language so intricate a writer; abounding, without measure, in obscure allusions, in the most twisted phraseology; perplexed into endless entanglements and dislocations, parenthesis within parenthesis; not

forgetting elisions, sudden whirls, quips, conceits and all manner of inexplicable crotchets: the whole moving on in the gayest manner, yet nowise in what seem military lines, but rather in huge parti-coloured mob-masses. How foreigners must find themselves bested in this case, our readers may best judge from the fact, that a work with the following title was undertaken some twenty years ago, for the benefit of Richter's own countrymen: '*K. Reinhold's Lexicon for Jean Paul's Works, or explanation of all the foreign words and unusual modes of speech which occur in his writings; with short notices of the historical persons and facts therein alluded to; and plain German versions of the more difficult passages in the context:—a necessary assistance for all who would read those works with profit!*'

So much for the dress or vehicle of Richter's thoughts: now let it only be remembered farther, that the thoughts themselves are often of the most abstruse description, so that not till after laborious meditation, can much, either of truth or of falsehood, be discerned in them; and we have a man, from whom readers with weak nerves, and a taste in any degree sickly, will not fail to recoil, perhaps with a sentiment approaching to horror. And yet, as we said, notwithstanding all these drawbacks, Richter already meets with a certain recognition in England; he has his readers and admirers; various translations from his works have been published among us; criticisms also, not without clear discernment, and nowise wanting in applause; and to all this, so far as we can see, even the Un-German part of the public has listened with some curiosity and hopeful anticipation. From which symptoms we should infer two things, both very comfortable to us in our present capacity: First, that the old strait-laced, microscopic sect of *belles-lettres* men, whose divinity was Elegance, a creed of French growth, and more admirable for men-milliners than for critics and philosophers, must be rapidly declining in these Islands; and secondly, which is a much more personal consideration, that, in still farther investigating and exhibiting this wonderful Jean Paul, we have attempted what will be, for many of our readers, no unwelcome service.

Our inquiry naturally divides itself into two departments, the Biographical and the Critical; concerning both of which, in their order, we have some observations to make; and what, in regard to the latter department at least, we reckon more profitable, some rather curious documents to present.

It does not appear that Richter's life, externally considered, differed much in general character from other literary lives, which, for most part, are so barren of incident: the earlier portion of it was straitened enough, but not otherwise distinguished; the latter and busiest portion of it was, in like manner, altogether private; spent chiefly in provincial towns, and apart from high scenes or persons; its principal occurrences the new books he wrote, its whole course a spiritual and silent one. He became an author in his nineteenth year; and with a conscientious assiduity adhered to that employment; not seeking, indeed carefully avoiding, any interruption or disturbance therein, were it only for a day or an hour. Nevertheless, in looking over those Sixty Volumes of his, we feel as if Richter's history must have another, much deeper interest and worth, than outward incidents could impart to it. For the spirit which shines more or less completely through his writings is one of perennial excellence; rare in all times and situations, and perhaps nowhere and in no time more rare than in literary Europe at this era. We see in this man a high, self-subsistent, original and, in many respects, even great character. He shows himself a man of wonderful gifts, and with, perhaps, a still happier combination and adjustment of these: in whom Philosophy and Poetry are not only reconciled, but blended together into a purer essence, into Religion; who, with the softest, most universal sympathy for outward things, is inwardly calm, impregnable; holds on his way through all temptations and afflictions, so quietly, yet so inflexibly; the true literary man among a thousand false ones, the Apollo among neatherds; in one word, a man understanding the nineteenth century, and living in the midst of it, yet whose life is, in some measure, a heroic and devout one. No character of this kind, we are aware, is to be formed without manifold and victorious struggling with the world; and the narrative of such struggling, what little of it can be narrated and interpreted, will belong to the highest species of history. The acted life of such a man, it has been said, 'is itself a Bible;' it is a 'Gospel of Freedom,' preached abroad to all men; whereby, among mean unbelieving souls, we may know that nobleness has not yet become impossible; and, languishing amid boundless triviality and despicability, still understand that man's nature is indefeasibly divine, and so hold fast what is the most important of all faiths, the faith in ourselves.

But if the acted life of a *pius Vates* is so high a matter, the

written life, which, if properly written, would be a translation and interpretation thereof, must also have great value. It has been said that no Poet is equal to his Poem, which saying is partially true; but, in a deeper sense, it may also be asserted, and with still greater truth, that no Poem is equal to its Poet. Now, it is Biography that first gives us both Poet and Poem; by the significance of the one elucidating and completing that of the other. That ideal outline of himself, which a man unconsciously shadows forth in his writings, and which, rightly deciphered, will be truer than any other representation of him, it is the task of the Biographer to fill-up into an actual coherent figure, and bring home to our experience, or at least our clear undoubting admiration, thereby to instruct and edify us in many ways. Conducted on such principles, the Biography of great men, especially of great Poets, that is, of men in the highest degree noble-minded and wise, might become one of the most dignified and valuable species of composition. As matters stand, indeed, there are few Biographies that accomplish anything of this kind: the most are mere Indexes of a Biography, which each reader is to write out for himself, as he peruses them; not the living body, but the dry bones of a body, which should have been alive. To expect any such Promethean virtue in a common Life-writer were unreasonable enough. How shall that unhappy Biographic brotherhood, instead of writing like Index-makers and Government-clerks, suddenly become enkindled with some sparks of intellect, or even of genial fire; and not only collecting dates and facts, but making use of them, look beyond the surface and economical form of a man's life, into its substance and spirit? The truth is, Biographies are in a similar case with Sermons and Songs: they have their scientific rules, their ideal of perfection and of imperfection, as all things have; but hitherto their rules are only, as it were, unseen Laws of Nature, not critical Acts of Parliament, and threaten us with no immediate penalty: besides, unlike Tragedies and Epics, such works may be something without being all: their simplicity of form, moreover, is apt to seem easiness of execution; and thus, for one artist in those departments, we have a thousand bunglers.

With regard to Richter, in particular, to say that his biographic treatment has been worse than usual, were saying much: yet worse than we expected, it has certainly been. Various 'Lives of Jean Paul,' anxiously endeavouring to profit by the public excitement while it lasted, and communicating in a given space almost a minimum of information, have been read by us,

within the last four years, with no great disappointment. We strove to take thankfully what little they had to give; and looked forward, in hope, to that promised 'Autobiography,' wherein all deficiencies were to be supplied. Several years before his death, it would seem, Richter had determined on writing some account of his own life; and with his customary honesty, had set about a thorough preparation for this task. After revolving many plans, some of them singular enough, he at last determined on the form of composition; and with a half-sportful allusion to Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit aus meinem Leben*, had prefixed to his work the title *Wahrheit aus meinem Leben* (Truth from my Life); having relinquished, as impracticable, the strange idea of 'writing, parallel to it, a *Dichtung* (Fiction) also, under cover of Nicolaus Margraf,'—a certain Apothecary existing only as hero of one of his last Novels! In this work, which weightier avocations had indeed retarded or suspended, considerable progress was said to have been made; and on Richter's decease, Herr Otto, a man of talents, who had been his intimate friend for half a lifetime, undertook the editing and completing of it; not without sufficient proclamation and assertion, which in the mean while was credible enough, that to him only could the post of Richter's Biographer belong.

Three little Volumes of that *Wahrheit aus Jean Pauls Leben*, published in the course of as many years, are at length before us. The First volume, which came out in 1826, occasioned some surprise, if not disappointment; yet still left room for hope. It was the commencement of a real Autobiography, and written with much heartiness and even dignity of manner; though taken up under a quite unexpected point of view; in that spirit of genial humour, of gay earnestness, which, with all its strange fantastic accompaniments, often sat on Jean Paul so gracefully, and to which, at any rate, no reader of his works could be a stranger. By virtue of an autocratic ukase, Paul had appointed himself 'Professor of his own History,' and delivered to the Universe three beautiful 'Lectures' on that subject; boasting, justly enough, that, in his special department, he was better informed than any other man whatever. He was not without his oratorical secrets and professorial habits: thus, as Mr. Wortley, in writing his parliamentary speech to be read within his hat, had marked in various passages, 'Here cough,' so Paul, with greater brevity, had an arbitrary hieroglyph introduced here and there, among his papers, and purporting, as he

tells us, "*Meine Herren, niemand scharre, niemand gähne*, Gentlemen, no scraping, no yawning!"—a hieroglyph, we must say, which many public speakers might stand more in need of than he.

Unfortunately, in the Second volume, no other Lectures came to light, but only a string of disconnected, indeed quite heterogeneous Notes, intended to have been fashioned into such; the full free stream of oratory dissipated itself into unsatisfactory drops. With the Third volume, which is by much the longest, Herr Otto appears more decidedly in his own person, though still rather with the scissors than with the pen; and behind a multitude of circumvallations and outposts, endeavours to advance his history a little; the Lectures having left it still almost at the very commencement. His peculiar plan, and the too manifest purpose to continue speaking in Jean Paul's manner, greatly obstruct his progress; which, indeed, is so inconsiderable, that at the end of this third volume, that is, after some seven hundred small octavo pages, we find the hero, as yet, scarcely beyond his twentieth year, and the history proper still only, as it were, beginning. We cannot but regret that Herr Otto, whose talent and good purpose, to say nothing of his relation to Richter, demand regard from us, had not adopted some straightforward method, and spoken out in plain prose, which seems a more natural dialect for him, what he had to say on this matter. Instead of a multifarious combination, tending so slowly, if at all, towards unity, he might, without omitting those 'Lectures,' or any 'Note' that had value, have given us a direct Narrative, which, if it had wanted the line of Beauty, might have had the still more indispensable line of Regularity, and been, at all events, far shorter. Till Herr Otto's work is completed, we cannot speak positively; but, in the mean while, we must say that it wears an unprosperous aspect, and leaves room to fear that, after all, Richter's Biography may still long continue a problem. As for ourselves, in this state of matters, what help, towards characterising Jean Paul's practical Life, we can afford, is but a few slight facts gleaned from Herr Otto's and other meaner works; and which, even in our own eyes, are extremely insufficient.

Richter was born at Wonsiedel in Baireuth, in the year 1763; and as his birthday fell on the 21st of March, it was sometimes wittily said that he and the Spring were born together. He himself mentions this, and with a laudable intention: 'this epigrammatic fact,' says he, 'that I the Professor and the Spring came into the world together, I have indeed brought

out a hundred times in conversation, before now; but I fire it off here purposely, like a cannon-salute, for the hundred-and-first time, that so by printing I may ever henceforth be unable to offer it again as *bon-mot bonbon*, when, through the Printer's Devil, it has already been presented to all the world.' Destiny, he seems to think, made another witticism on him; the word *Richter* being appellative as well as proper, in the German tongue, where it signifies *Judge*. His Christian name, Jean Paul, which long passed for some freak of his own, and a pseudonym, he seems to have derived honestly enough from his maternal grandfather, Johann Paul Kuhn, a substantial cloth-maker in Hof; only translating the German *Johann* into the French *Jean*. The Richters, for at least two generations, had been schoolmasters, or very subaltern churchmen, distinguished for their poverty and their piety: the grandfather, it appears, is still remembered in his little circle, as a man of quite remarkable innocence and holiness; 'in Neustadt,' says his descendant, 'they will show you a bench behind the organ, where he knelt on Sundays, and a cave he had made for himself in what is called the Little Culm, where he was wont to pray. Holding, and laboriously discharging, three school or church offices, his yearly income scarcely amounted to fifteen pounds: 'and at this Hunger-fountain, common enough for Baireuth school-people, the man stood thirty-five years long, and cheerfully drew.' Preferment had been slow in visiting him: but at length 'it came to pass,' says Paul, 'just in my birth-year, that, on the 6th of August, probably through special connexions with the *Higher Powers*, he did obtain one of the most important places; in comparison with which, truly, Rectorate, and Town, and cave in the Culmberg, were well worth exchanging; a place, namely, in the Neustadt Churchyard.*—His good wife had been promoted thither twenty years before him. My parents had taken me, an infant, along with them to his death-bed. He was in the act of departing, when a clergyman (as my father has often told me) said to them: Now, let the old Jacob lay his hand on the child, and bless him. I was held into the bed of death, and he laid his hand on my head.—Thou good old grandfather! Often have I thought of thy hand, blessing as it grew cold,—when Fate led me out of dark hours into clearer,—

* *Gottesacker* (God's-field), not *Kirchhof*, the more common term and exactly corresponding to ours, is the word Richter uses here,—and almost always elsewhere, which in his writings he has often occasion to do.

and already I can believe in thy blessing, in this material world, whose life, foundation and essence is Spirit!'

The father, who at this time occupied the humble post of *Tertius* (Under-schoolmaster) and Organist at Wonsiedel, was shortly afterwards appointed Clergyman in the hamlet of Jodiz; and thence, in the course of years, transferred to Schwarzenbach on the Saale. He too was of a truly devout disposition, though combining with it more energy of character, and apparently more general talent; being noted in his neighbourhood as a bold, zealous preacher; and still partially known to the world, we believe, for some meritorious compositions in Church-music. In poverty he cannot be said to have altogether equalled his predecessor, who through life ate nothing but bread and beer; yet poor enough he was; and no less cheerful than poor. The thriving burgher's daughter, whom he took to wife, had, as we guess, brought no money with her, but only habits little advantageous for a schoolmaster or parson; at all events, the worthy man, frugal as his household was, had continual difficulties, and even died in debt. Paul, who in those days was called Fritz, narrates gaily, how his mother used to despatch him to Hof, her native town, with a provender-bag strapped over his shoulders, under pretext of purchasing at a cheaper rate there; but in reality to get his groceries and dainties furnished gratis by his grandmother. He was wont to kiss his grandfather's hand behind the loom, and speak with him; while the good old lady, parsimonious to all the world, but lavish to her own, privily filled his bag with the good things of this life, and even gave him almonds for himself, which, however, he kept for a friend. One other little trait, quite new in ecclesiastical annals, we must here communicate. Paul, in summing up the joys of existence at Jodiz, mentions this among the number:—

'In Autumn evenings (and though the weather were bad) the Father used to go in his night-gown, with Paul and Adam, into a potato-field lying over the Saale. The one younker carried a mattock, the other a hand-basket. Arrived on the ground, the Father set to digging new potatoes, so many as were wanted for supper; Paul gathered them from the bed into the basket, whilst Adam, clambering in the hazel thickets, looked out for the best nuts. After a time, Adam had to come down from his boughs into the bed, and Paul in his turn ascended. And thus, with potatoes and nuts, they returned contentedly home; and the pleasure of having run abroad, some mile in space, some hour in time, and then of celebrating the harvest-home, by candlelight, when they

came back,—let every one paint to himself as brilliantly as the receiver thereof.'

To such persons as argue that the respectability of the cloth depends on its price at the clothier's, it must appear surprising that a Protestant clergyman, who not only was in no case to keep fox-hounds, but even saw it convenient to dig his own potatoes, should not have fallen under universal odium, and felt his usefulness very considerably diminished. Nothing of this kind, however, becomes visible in the history of the Jodiz Parson: we find him a man powerful in his vocation; loved and venerated by his flock; nay, associating at will, and ever as an honoured guest, with the gentry of Voigtland, not indeed in the character of a gentleman, yet in that of priest, which he reckoned far higher. Like an old Lutheran, says his son, he believed in the great, as he did in ghosts; but without any shade of fear. The truth is, the man had a cheerful, pure, religious heart; was diligent in business, and fervent in spirit: and, in all the relations of his life, found this well-nigh sufficient for him.

To our Professor, as to Poets in general, the recollections of childhood had always something of an ideal, almost celestial character. Often, in his fictions, he describes such scenes with a fond minuteness; nor is poverty any deadly, or even unwelcome ingredient in them. On the whole, it is not by money, or money's worth, that man lives and has his being. Is not God's Universe *within* our head, whether there be a torn skull-cap or a king's diadem *without?* Let no one imagine that Paul's young years were unhappy; still less that he looks back on them in a lachrymose, sentimental manner, with the smallest symptom either of boasting or whining. Poverty of a far sterner sort than this would have been a light matter to him; for a kind mother, Nature herself, had already provided against it; and, like the mother of Achilles, rendered him invulnerable to outward things. There was a bold, deep, joyful spirit looking through those young eyes; and to such a spirit the world *has* nothing poor, but all is rich, and full of loveliness and wonder. That our readers may glance with us into this foreign Parsonage, we shall translate some paragraphs from Paul's second Lecture, and thereby furnish, at the same time, a specimen of his professorial style and temper:

'To represent the Jodiz life of our Hans Paul,—for by this name we shall for a time distinguish him, yet ever changing it with others,—our

best course, I believe, will be to conduct him through a whole Idyl-year; dividing the normal year into four seasons, as so many quarterly Idyls; four Idyls exhaust his happiness.

'For the rest, let no one marvel at finding an Idyl-kingdom and pastoral-world in a little hamlet and parsonage. In the smallest bed you can raise a tulip-tree, which shall extend its flowery boughs over all the garden; and the life-breath of joy can be inhaled as well through a window as in the open wood and sky. Nay, is not Man's Spirit (with all its infinite celestial-spaces) walled-in within a six-feet Body, with integuments, and Malpighian mucuses and capillary tubes; and has only five strait world-windows, of Senses, to open for the boundless, round-eyed, round-sunned All;—and yet it discerns and reproduces an All!

'Scarcely do I know with which of the four quarterly Idyls to begin; for each is a little heavenly forecourt to the next: however, the climax of joys, if we start with Winter and January, will perhaps be most apparent. In the cold, our Father had commonly, like an Alpine herdsman, come down from the upper altitude of his study; and, to the joy of the children, was dwelling on the plain of the general family-room. In the morning, he sat by a window, committing his Sunday's sermon to memory; and the three sons, Fritz (who I myself am), and Adam, and Gottlieb carried, by turns, the full coffee-cup to him, and still more gladly carried back the empty one, because the carrier was then entitled to pick the unmelted remains of the sugar-candy (taken against cough) from the bottom thereof. Out of doors, truly, the sky covered all things with silence; the brook with ice, the village with snow: but in our room there was life; under the stove a pigeon-establishment; on the windows finch-cages; on the floor, the invincible bull brach, our *Bonne*, the night-guardian of the court-yard; and a poodle, and the pretty *Scharmantel* (Poll), a present from the Lady von Plotho;—and close by, the kitchen, with two maids; and farther off, against the other end of the house, our stable, with all sorts of bovine, swinish and feathered cattle, and their noises: the threshers with their flails, also at work within the court-yard, I might reckon as another item. In this way, with nothing but society on all hands, the whole male portion of the household easily spent their forenoon in tasks of memory, not far from the female portion, as busily employed in cooking.

'Holidays occur in every occupation; thus I too had my airing holidays,—analogous to watering holidays,—so that I could travel out in the snow of the court-yard, and to the barn with its threshing. Nay, was there a delicate embassy to be transacted in the village,—for example, to the schoolmaster, to the tailor,—I was sure to be despatched thither in the middle of my lessons; and thus I still got forth into the open air and the cold, and measured myself with the new snow. At noon, before our own dinner, we children might also, in the kitchen, have the hungry satisfaction to see the threshers fall-to and consume their victuals.

'The afternoon, again, was still more important, and richer in joys. Winter shortened and sweetened our lessons. In the long dusk, our Father walked to and fro; and the children, according to ability, trotted under his night-gown, holding by his hands. At sound of the Vesper-bell, we placed ourselves in a circle, and in concert devotionally chanted the hymn, *Die finstre Nacht bricht stark herein* (The gloomy Night is gathering round). Only in villages, not in towns, where probably there is more night than day labour, have the evening chimes a meaning and beauty, and are the swan-song of the day: the evening-bell is as it were the muffle of the over-loud heart, and, like a *rance des vaches* of the plains, calls men from their running and toiling, into the land of silence and dreams. After a pleasant watching about the kitchen-door for the moonrise of candlelight, we saw our wide room at once illuminated and barricaded; to wit, the window-shutters were closed and bolted; and behind these window bastions and breast-works the child felt himself snugly nestled, and well secured against Knecht Ruprecht,* who on the outside could not get in, but only in vain keep growling and humming.

'About this period too it was that we children might undress, and in long train-shirts skip up and down. Idyllic joys of various sorts alternated: our Father either had his quarto Bible, interleaved with blank folio sheets, before him, and was marking, at each verse, the book wherein he had read anything concerning it;—or more commonly he had his ruled music-paper; and, undisturbed by this racketing of children, was composing whole concerts of church-music, with all their divisions; constructing his internal melody without any help of external tones (as Reichard too advises), or rather in spite of all external mistones. In both cases, in the last with the more pleasure, I looked on as he wrote; and rejoiced specially, when, by pauses of various instruments, whole pages were at once filled up. The children all sat sporting *on* that long writing and eating table, or even *under* it. * * *

'Then, at length, how did the winter evening, once a week, mount in worth, when the old errand-woman, coated in snow, with her fruit, flesh and general-ware basket, entered the kitchen from Hof; and we all in this case had the distant town in miniature before our eyes, nay before our noses, for there were pastry-cakes in it!'

Thus, in dull winter imprisonment, among all manner of bovine, swinish and feathered cattle, with their noises, may Idyllic joys be found, if there is an eye to see them, and a heart to taste them. Truly happiness is cheap, did we apply to the right merchant for it. Paul warns us elsewhere not to believe, for these Idyls, that there were no sour days, no chidings and the like, at Jodiz: yet, on the whole, he had good reason to

* The *Rawhead* (with bloody bones) of Germany.

rejoice in his parents. They loved him well; his Father, he says, would 'shed tears' over any mark of quickness or talent in little Fritz: they were virtuous also, and devout, which, after all, is better than being rich 'Ever and anon,' says he, 'I was hearing some narrative from my Father, how he and other clergymen had taken parts of their dress and given them to the poor: he related these things with joy, not as an admonition, but merely as a necessary occurrence. O God! I thank thee for my Father!'

Richter's education was not of a more sumptuous sort than his board and lodging. Some disagreement with the Schoolmaster at Jodiz had induced the Parson to take his sons from school, and determine to teach them himself. This determination he executed faithfully indeed, yet in the most limited style; his method being no Pestalozzian one, but simply the old scheme of task-work and force-work, operating on a Latin grammar and a Latin vocabulary: and the two boys sat all day, and all year, at home, without other preceptorial nourishment than getting by heart long lists of words. Fritz learned honestly nevertheless, and in spite of his brother Adam's bad example. For the rest, he was totally destitute of books, except such of his Father's theological ones as he could come at by stealth: these, for want of better, he eagerly devoured; understanding, as he says, nothing whatever of their contents. With no less impetuosity, and no less profit, he perused the antiquated sets of Newspapers, which a kind patroness, the Lady von Plotho, already mentioned, was in the habit of furnishing to his Father, not in separate sheets, but in sheaves monthly. This was the extent of his reading. Jodiz, too, was the most sequestered of all hamlets; had neither natural nor artificial beauty; no memorable thing could be seen there in a lifetime. Nevertheless, under an immeasurable Sky, and in a quite wondrous World it did stand; and glimpses into the infinite spaces of the Universe, and even into the infinite spaces of Man's Soul, could be had there as well as elsewhere. Fritz had his own thoughts, in spite of schoolmasters: a little heavenly seed of Knowledge, nay of Wisdom, had been laid in him, and with no gardener but Nature herself, it was silently growing. To some of our readers, the following circumstance may seem unparalleled, if not unintelligible; to others nowise so:

'In the future Literary History of our hero it will become doubtful whether he was not born more for Philosophy than for Poetry. In

earliest times the word *Weltweisheit* (Philosophy, *World-wisdom*),—yet also another word, *Morgenland* (East, *Morning-land*),—was to me an open Heaven's-gate, through which I looked-in over long, long gardens of joy.—Never shall I forget that inward occurrence, till now narrated to no mortal, wherein I witnessed the birth of my Self-consciousness, of which I can still give the place and time. One forenoon, I was standing, a very young child, in the outer door, and looking leftward at the stack of the fuel-wood,—when all at once the internal vision, "I am a ME (*ich bin ein Ich*)," came like a flash from heaven before me, and in gleaming light ever afterwards continued: then had my ME, for the first time, seen itself, and forever. Deceptions of memory are scarcely conceivable here; for, in regard to an event occurring altogether in the veiled Holy-of-Holies of man, and whose novelty alone has given permanence to such every-day recollections accompanying it, no posterior description from another party would have mingled itself with accompanying circumstances at all.'

It was in his thirteenth year that the family removed to that better church-living at Schwarzenbach, with which change, so far as school-education was concerned, prospects considerably brightened for him. The public Teacher there was no deep scholar or thinker, yet a lively, genial man, and warmly interested in his pupils; among whom he soon learned to distinguish Fritz, as a boy of altogether superior gifts. What was of still more importance, Fritz now got access to books; entered into a course of highly miscellaneous, self-selected reading; and what with Romances, what with Belles-Lettres works, and Hutchesonian Philosophy, and controversial Divinity, saw an astonishing scene opening round him on all hands. His Latin and Greek were now better taught; he even began learning Hebrew. Two clergymen of the neighbourhood took pleasure in his company, young as he was; and were of great service now and afterwards: it was under their auspices that he commenced composition, and also speculating on Theology, wherein he 'inclined strongly to the heterodox side.'

In the 'family-room,' however, things were not nearly so flourishing. The Professor's three Lectures terminate before this date; but we gather from his Notes that surly clouds hung over Schwarzenbach, that 'his evil days began there.' The Father was engaged in more complex duties than formerly, went often from home, was encumbered with debt, and lost his former cheerfulness of humour. For his sons he saw no outlet except the hereditary craft of School-keeping; and let the matter rest there, taking little farther charge of them. In some

three years the poor man, worn down with manifold anxieties, departed this life; leaving his pecuniary affairs, which he had long calculated on rectifying by the better income of Schwarzenbach, sadly deranged.

Meanwhile Friedrich had been sent to the Hof *Gymnasium* (Town-school), where, notwithstanding this event, he continued some time; two years in all; apparently the most profitable period of his whole tuition; indeed, the only period when, properly speaking, he had any tutor but himself. The good old cloth-making grandfather and grandmother took charge of him, under their roof; and he had a body of teachers, all notable in their way. Herr Otto represents him as a fine, trustful, kindly yet resolute youth, who went through his persecutions, preferments, studies, friendships and other school-destinies in a highly creditable manner; and demonstrates this, at great length, by various details of facts, far too minute for insertion here. As a trait of Paul's intellectual habitudes, it may be mentioned that, at this time, he scarcely made any progress in History or Geography, much as he profited in all other branches; nor was the dull teacher entirely to blame, but also the indisposed pupil: indeed, it was not till long afterwards, that he overcame or suppressed his contempt for those studies, and with an effort of his own acquired some skill in them.* The like we have heard of other Poets and Philosophers, especially when their teachers chanced to be prosaists and unphilosophical. Richter boasts that he was never punished at school; yet between him and the Historico-geographical *Conrector* (Second Master) no good understanding could subsist. On one tragi-comical occasion, of another sort, they came into still more decided collision. The zealous Conrector, a most solid pains-taking man, desirous to render his Gymnasium as like a University as possible, had imagined that a series of 'Disputations,' some foreshadow of those held at College, might be a useful, as certainly enough it would be an ornamental thing. By ill-luck the worthy President had selected some church-article for the theme of such a

* 'All History,' thus he writes in his thirty-second year, 'in so far as it is an affair of memory, can only be reckoned a sapless heartless thistle for pedantic chaffinches;—but, on the other hand, like Nature, it has highest value, in as far as we, by means of it, as by means of Nature, can divine and read the Infinite Spirit, who, with Nature and History, as with letters, legibly writes to us. He who finds a God in the physical world will also find one in the moral, which is History. Nature forces on our heart a Creator; History a Providence.'

Disputation: one boy was to defend, and it fell to Paul's lot to impugn the dogma; a task which, as hinted above, he was very specially qualified to undertake. Now, honest Paul knew nothing of the limits of this game; never dreamt but he might argue with his whole strength, to whatever results it might lead. In a very few rounds, accordingly, his antagonist was borne out of the ring, as good as lifeless; and the Conrector himself, seeing the danger, had, as it were, to descend from his presiding chair, and clap the gauntlets on his own more experienced hands. But Paul, nothing daunted, gave him also a Roland for an Oliver; nay, as it became more and more manifest to all eyes, was fast reducing him also to the frightfulest extremity. The Conrector's tongue threatened cleaving to the roof of his mouth; for his brain was at a stand, or whirling in eddies; only his gall was in active play. Nothing remained for him but to close the debate by a "Silence, Sirrah!"—and leave the room, with a face (like that of the much more famous Subrector Hans von Füchslein*) 'of a mingled colour, like red bole, green chalk, tinsel-yellow, and *vomissement de la reine*.'

With his studies in the Leipzig University, whither he proceeded in 1781, begins a far more important era for Paul; properly the era of his manhood, and first entire dependence on himself. In regard to literary or scientific culture, it is not clear that he derived much furtherance from Leipzig; much more, at least, than the mere neighbourhood of libraries and fellow-learners might anywhere else have afforded him. Certain professorial courses he did attend, and with diligence; but too much in the character of critic, as well as of pupil: he was in the habit of 'measuring minds' with men so much older and more honourable than he; and erelong his respect for many of them had not a little abated. What his original plan of studies was, or whether he had any fixed plan, we do not learn; at Hof, without election or rejection on his own part, he had been trained with some view to Theology; but this and every other professional view soon faded away in Leipzig, owing to a variety of causes; and Richter, now still more decidedly a self-teacher, broke loose from all corporate guilds whatsoever, and in intellectual culture, as in other respects, endeavoured to seek out a basis of his own. He read multitudes of books, and wrote down whole volumes of excerpts, and private speculations; labouring in all directions with insatiable eagerness; but from

* See *Quintus Fixlein*, c. 7.

the University he derived little guidance, and soon came to expect little. Ernesti, the only truly eminent man of the place, had died shortly after Paul's arrival there.

Nay, it was necessity as well as choice that detached him from professions; he had not the means to enter any. Quite another and far more pressing set of cares lay round him; not how he could live easily in future years, but how he could live at all in the present, was the grand question with him. Whatever it might be in regard to intellectual matters, certainly, in regard to moral matters, Leipzig was his true seminary, where, with many stripes, Experience taught him the wisest lessons. It was here that he first saw Poverty, not in the shape of Parsimony, but in the far sterner one of actual Want; and, unseen and single-handed, wrestling with Fortune for life or death, first proved what a rugged, deep-rooted, indomitable strength, under such genial softness, dwelt in him; and from a buoyant cloud-capt Youth, perfected himself into a clear, free, benignant and lofty-minded Man.

Meanwhile the steps towards such a consummation were painful enough. His old Schoolmaster at Schwarzenbach, himself a Leipziger, had been wont to assure him that he might live for nothing in Leipzig, so easily were 'free-tables,' '*stipendia*,' private teaching and the like, to be procured there, by youths of merit. That Richter was of this latter species, the Rector of the Hof Gymnasium bore honourable witness; inviting the Leipzig dignitaries, in his *Testimonium*, to try the candidate themselves; and even introducing him in person (for the two had travelled together) to various influential men: but all these things availed him nothing. The Professors he found beleaguered by a crowd of needy sycophants, diligent in season and out of season, whose whole tactics were too loathsome to him; on all hands, he heard the sad saying: *Lipsia vult expectari*, Leipzig preferments must be waited for. Now, waiting was of all things the most inconvenient for poor Richter. In his pocket he had little; friends, except one fellow-student, he had none; and at home the finance-department had fallen into a state of total perplexity, fast verging towards final ruin. The worthy old Cloth-manufacturer was now dead; his Wife soon followed him; and the Widow Richter, her favourite daughter, who had removed to Hof, though against the advice of all friends, that she might be near her, now stood alone there, with a young family, and in the most forlorn situation. She was appointed chief heir, indeed; but former benefactions had left

far less to inherit than had been expected; nay, the other relatives contested the whole arrangement, and she had to waste her remaining substance in lawsuits, scarcely realising from it, in the shape of borrowed pittances and by forced sales, enough to supply her with daily bread. Nor was it poverty alone that she had to suffer, but contumely no less; the Hof public openly finding her guilty of Unthrift, and, instead of assistance, repeating to her dispraise, over their coffee, the old proverb, 'Hard got, soon gone;' for all which evils she had no remedy, but loud complaining to Heaven and Earth. The good woman, with the most honest dispositions, seems in fact to have had but a small share of wisdom; far too small for her present trying situation. Herr Otto says that Richter's portraiture of Lenette in the *Blumen-Frucht-und Dornen-Stücke* (Flower, Fruit and Thorn Pieces) contains many features of his mother: Lenette is of 'an upright, but common and limited nature;' assiduous, even to excess, in sweeping and scouring; true-hearted, religious in her way, yet full of discontents, suspicion and headstrong whims; a spouse for ever plagued and plaguing; as the brave Stanislaus Siebenkäs, that true Diogenes of impoverished Poors'-Advocates, often felt, to his cost, beside her. Widow Richter's family, as well as her fortune, was under bad government, and sinking into lower and lower degradation: Adam, the brother, mentioned above, as Paul's yoke-fellow in Latin and potato-digging, had now fallen away even from the humble pretension of being a Schoolmaster, or indeed of being anything; for after various acts of vagrancy, he had enlisted in a marching regiment; with which, or in other devious courses, he marched on, and only the grand billet-master, Death, found him fixed quarters. The Richter establishment had parted from its old moorings, and was now, with wind and tide, fast drifting towards fatal whirlpools.

In this state of matters, the scarcity of Leipzig could nowise be supplied from the fulness of Hof; but rather the two households stood like concave mirrors reflecting one another's keen hunger into a still keener for both. What outlook was there for the poor Philosopher of nineteen? Even his meagre 'bread and milk' could not be had for nothing; it became a serious consideration for him that the shoemaker, who was to sole his boots, 'did not trust.' Far from affording him any sufficient moneys, his straitened mother would willingly have made him borrow for her own wants; and was incessantly persuading him to get places for his brothers. Richter felt too, that except

himself, desolate, helpless as he was, those brothers, that old mother, had no stay on earth. There are men with whom it is as with Schiller's Friedland: 'Night must it be ere Friedland's star will beam.' On this forsaken youth Fortune seemed to have let loose her bandogs, and hungry Ruin had him in the wind; without was no help, no counsel: but there lay a giant force within; and so, from the depths of that sorrow and abasement his better soul rose purified and invincible, like Hercules from his long Labours. A high, cheerful Stoicism grew up in the man. Poverty, Pain and all Evil, he learned to regard, not as what they seemed, but as what they were; he learned to despise them, nay in kind mockery to sport with them, as with bright-spotted wild-beasts which he had tamed and harnessed. 'What is Poverty,' said he; 'who is the man that whines under it? The pain is but as that of piercing the ears is to a maiden, and you hang jewels in the wound.' Dark thoughts he had, but they settled into no abiding gloom: 'sometimes,' says Otto, 'he would wave his finger across his brow, as if driving back some hostile series of ideas;' and farther complaint he did not utter.* During this sad period, he wrote out for himself a little manual of practical philosophy, naming it *Andachtsbuch* (Book of Devotion), which contains such maxims as these:—

'Every unpleasant feeling is a sign that I have become untrue to my resolutions.—Epictetus was not unhappy.—

'Not chance, but I am to blame for my sufferings.

'It were an impossible miracle if none befell thee: look for their coming, therefore; each day make thyself sure of many.

'Say not, were my sorrows other than these, I should bear them better.

'Think of the host of Worlds, and of the plagues on this World-mote.—Death puts an end to the whole.—

'For virtue's sake I am here: but if a man, for his task, forgets and sacrifices all, why shouldst not thou?—

'Expect injuries, for men are weak, and thou thyself doest such too often.

'Mollify thy heart by painting out the sufferings of thy enemy; think of him as of one spiritually sick, who deserves sympathy.—

'Most men judge so badly; why wouldst thou be praised by a child?

* In bodily pain he was wont to show the like endurance and indifference. At one period of his life he had violent headaches, which forced him, for the sake of a slight alleviation, to keep his head perfectly erect; you might see him talking with a calm face and all his old gaiety, and only know by this posture that he was suffering.

—No one would respect thee in a beggar's coat: what is a respect that is paid to woollen cloth, not to thee?'

These are wise maxims for so young a man; but what was wiser still, he did not rest satisfied with mere maxims, which, how true soever, are only a dead letter, till Action first gives them life and worth. Besides devout prayer to the gods, he set his own shoulder to the wheel. 'Evil,' says he, 'is like a nightmare; the instant you begin to strive with it, to bestir yourself, it has already ended.' Without farther parleying, there as he stood, Richter grappled with his Fate, and resolutely determined on self-help. His means, it is true, were of the most unpromising sort, yet the only means he had: the writing of Books! He forthwith commenced writing them. The *Grönländische Prozesse* (Greenland Lawsuits), a collection of satirical sketches, full of wild gay wit and keen insight, was composed in that base environment of his, with unpaid milkscores and unsoled boots; and even still survives, though the Author, besides all other disadvantages, was then only in his nineteenth year. But the heaviest part of the business yet remained; that of finding a purchaser and publisher. Richter tried all Leipzig with his manuscript, in vain; to a man, with that total contempt of Grammar which Jedediah Cleishbotham also complains of, they 'declined the *article*.' Paul had to stand by, as so many have done, and see his sunbeams weighed on hay-scales, and the hay-balance give no symptoms of moving. But Paul's heart moved as little as the balance. Leipzig being now exhausted, the World was all before him where to try; he had nothing for it but to search till he found, or till he died searching. One Voss of Berlin at length bestirred himself; accepted, printed the Book, and even gave him sixteen *louis d'or* for it. What a Potosi was here! Paul determined to be an author henceforth, and nothing but an author; now that his soul might even be kept in his body by that trade. His mother, hearing that he had written a book, thought that perhaps he could even write a sermon, and was for his coming down to preach in the High Church of Hof. 'What is a sermon,' said Paul, 'which every miserable student can spout forth? Or, think you, there is a parson in Hof that, not to speak of writing my Book, can, in the smallest degree, understand it?'

But unfortunately his Potosi was like other mines; the metalliferous vein did not last; what miners call a *shift* or *trouble* occurred in it, and now there was nothing but hard rock

to hew on. The *Grönländische Prozesse*, though printed, did not sell; the public was in quest of pap and treacle, not of fierce curry like this. The Reviewing world mostly passed it by without notice; one poor dog in Leipzig even lifted up his leg over it. 'For anything we know,' saith he, 'much, if not all of what the Author here, in bitter tone, sets forth on bookmaking, theologians, women and so on, may be true; but throughout the whole work, the determination to be witty acts on him so strongly, that we cannot doubt but his book will excite in all rational readers so much disgust, that they will see themselves constrained to close it again without delay.' And herewith the ill-starred quadruped passes on, as if nothing special had happened. 'Singular!' adds Herr Otto, 'this review, which at the time pretended to some ephemeral attention, and likely enough obtained it, would have fallen into everlasting oblivion, had not its connexion with that very work, which every rational reader was to close again, or rather never to open, raised it up for moments!' One moment, say we, is enough: let it drop again into that murky pool, and sink there to endless depths; for all flesh, and reviewer-flesh too, is fallible and pardonable.

Richter's next Book was soon ready; but, in this position of affairs, no man would buy it. The *Selection from the Papers of the Devil*, such was its wonderful title, lay by him, on quite another principle than the Horatian one, for seven long years. It was in vain that he exhibited, and corresponded, and left no stone unturned, ransacking the world for a publisher; there was none anywhere to be met with. The unwearied Richter tried other plans. He presented Magazine Editors with Essays, some one in ten of which might be accepted; he made joint-stock with certain provincial literati of the Hof district, who had cash, and published for themselves; he sometimes borrowed, but was in hot haste to repay; he lived as the young ravens; he was often in danger of starving. 'The prisoner's allowance,' says he, 'is bread and water; but I had only the latter.'

'Nowhere,' observes Richter on another occasion, 'can you collect the stress-memorials and siege-medals of Poverty more pleasantly and philosophically than at College: the Academic Bursche exhibit to us how many Humorists and Diogeneses Germany has in it.'* Travelling through this parched Sahara,

* By certain speculators on German affairs, much has been written and talked about what is, after all, a very slender item in German affairs, the *Burschenleben*, or manners of the young men at Universities. We must regret that in discussing this matter, since it was

with nothing round him but stern sandy solitude, and no landmark on Earth, but only loadstars in the Heaven, Richter does not anywhere appear to have faltered in his progress; for a moment to have lost heart, or even to have lost good humour. 'The man who fears not death,' says the Greek Poet, 'will start at no shadows.' Paul had looked Desperation full in the face, and found that for him she was not desperate. Sorely pressed on from without, his inward energy, his strength both of thought and resolve, did but increase, and establish itself on a surer and surer foundation; he stood like a rock amid the beating of continual tempests; nay, a rock crowned with foliage; and in its clefts nourishing flowers of sweetest perfume. For there was a passionate fire in him, as well as a stoical calmness; tenderest Love was there, and Devout Reverence; and a deep genial Humour lay, like warm sunshine, softening the whole, blending the whole into light sportful harmony. In these its hard trials, whatever was noblest in his nature came out in still purer clearness. It was here that he learned to distinguish what is perennial and imperishable in man, from what is transient and earthly; and to prize the latter, were it king's crowns and conqueror's triumphal chariots, but as the wrappage of the jewel; we might say, but as the finer or coarser Paper on which the Heroic Poem of Life is to be written. A lofty indestructible faith in the dignity of man took possession of him, and a disbelief in all other dignities; and the vulgar world, and what it could give him, or withhold from him, was, in his eyes, but a small matter. Nay, had he not found a voice for these things; which, though no man would listen to it, he felt to be a true one, and that if true no tone of it could be altogether lost? Preaching forth the Wisdom, which in the dark deep wells of Adversity he had drawn up, he felt himself strong, courageous,

thought worth discussing, the true significance and soul of it should not have been, by some faint indication, pointed out to us. Apart from its duelling punctilios, and beer-songs, and tobacco-smoking, and other fopperies of the system, which are to the German student merely what coach-driving and horse-dealing, and other kindred fopperies, are to the English, Burschenism is not without its meaning more than Oxfordism or Cambridgeism. The Bursch strives to say in the strongest language he can: "See! I am an unmoneyed scholar, and a free *man;*" the Oxonian and Cantab, again, endeavour to say: "See! I am a moneyed scholar, and a spirited *gentleman.*" We rather think the Bursch's assertion, were it rightly worded, would be the more profitable of the two.

even gay. He had 'an internal world wherewith to fence himself against the frosts and heats of the external.' Studying, writing, in this mood, though grim Scarcity looked-in on him through the windows, he ever looked out again on that fiend with a quiet, half-satirical eye. Surely, we should find it hard to wish any generous nature such fortune: yet is one such man, nursed into manhood amid these stern, truth-telling influences, worth a thousand popular ballad-mongers, and sleek literary gentlemen, kept in perpetual boyhood by influences that always lie.

'In my Historical Lectures,' says Paul, 'the business of Hungering will in truth more and more make its appearance,—with the hero it rises to a great height,—about as often as Feasting in *Thummel's Travels*, and Tea-drinking in Richardson's *Clarissa;* nevertheless, I cannot help saying to Poverty: Welcome! so thou come not at quite too late a time! Wealth bears heavier on talent than Poverty; under gold-mountains and thrones, who knows how many a spiritual giant may lie crushed down and buried! When among the flames of youth, and above all of hotter powers as well, the oil of Riches is also poured in,—little will remain of the Phœnix but his ashes; and only a Goethe has force to keep, even at the sun of good fortune, his phœnix-wings unsinged. The poor Historical Professor, in this place, would not, for much money, have had much money in his youth. Fate manages Poets, as men do singing-birds; you overhang the cage of the singer and make it dark, till at length he has caught the tunes you play to him, and can sing them rightly.'

There have been many Johnsons, Heynes and other meaner natures, in every country, that have passed through as hard a probation as Richter's was, and borne permanent traces of its good and its evil influences; some with their modesty and quiet endurance combining a sickly dispiritment, others a hardened dulness or even deadness of heart; nay, there are some whom Misery itself cannot teach, but only exasperate; who far from parting with the mirror of their Vanity, when it is trodden in pieces, rather collect the hundred fragments of it, and with more fondness and more bitterness than ever, behold not one but a hundred images of Self therein: to these men Pain is a pure evil, and as school-dunces their hard Pedagogue will only whip them to the end. But in modern days, and even among the better instances, there is scarcely one that we remember who has drawn from poverty and suffering such unmixed advantage as Jean Paul; acquiring under it not only Herculean strength, but the softest tenderness of soul; a view of man and man's life not less

cheerful, even sportful, than it is deep and calm. To Fear he is a stranger; not only the rage of men, 'the ruins of Nature would strike him fearless;' yet he has a heart vibrating to all the finest thrills of Mercy, a deep loving sympathy with all created things. There is, we must say, something Old-Grecian in this form of mind; yet Old-Grecian under the new conditions of our own time; not an Ethnic, but a Christian greatness. Richter might have stood beside Socrates, as a faithful though rather tumultuous disciple; or better still, he might have bandied repartees with Diogenes, who, if he could nowhere find Men, must at least have admitted that this too was a Spartan Boy. Diogenes and he, as much as they differed, mostly to the disadvantage of the former, would have found much in common: above all, that resolute self-dependence, and quite settled indifference to the 'force of public opinion.' Of this latter quality, as well as of various other qualities in Richter, we have a curious proof in the Episode, which Herr Otto here for the first times details with accuracy, and at large, 'concerning the Costume controversies.' There is something great as well as ridiculous in this whole story of the Costume, which we must not pass unnoticed.

It was in the second year of his residence at Leipzig, and when, as we have seen, his necessities were pressing enough, that Richter, finding himself unpatronised by the World, thought it might be reasonable if he paid a little attention, as far as convenient, to the wishes, rational orders and even whims of his only other Patron, namely, of Himself. Now the long visits of the hair-dresser, with his powders, puffs and pomatums, were decidedly irksome to him, and even too expensive; besides, his love of Swift and Sterne made him love the English and their modes; which things being considered, Paul made free to cut off his cue altogether, and with certain other alterations in his dress, to walk abroad in what was called the English fashion. We rather conjecture that, in some points, it was, after all, but Pseudo-English; at least, we can find no tradition of any such mode having then or ever been prevalent here in its other details. For besides the docked cue, he had shirts *à la Hamlet;* wore his breast open, without neckcloth: in such guise did he appear openly. Astonishment took hold of the minds of men. German students have more license than most people in selecting fantastic garbs; but the bare neck and want of cue seemed graces beyond the reach of true art. We can figure the massive, portly cynic, with what humour twinkling in his eye he came forth among the elegant gentlemen; feeling, like that juggler-

divinity Ramdass, well known to Baptist Missionaries, that 'he had fire enough in his stomach to burn away all the sins of the world.' It was a species of pride, even of foppery, we will admit; but a tough, strong-limbed species, like that which in ragged gown 'trampled on the pride of Plato.'

Nowise in so respectable a light, however, did a certain *Magister*, or pedagogue dignitary, of Richter's neighbourhood regard the matter. Poor Richter, poor in purse, rich otherwise, had at this time, hired for himself a small mean garden-house, that he might have a little fresh air, through summer, in his studies: the Magister, who had hired a large sumptuous one in the same garden, naturally met him in his walks, bare-necked, cueless; and perhaps not liking the cast of his countenance, strangely twisted into Sardonic wrinkles, with all its broad honest benignity,—took it in deep dudgeon that such an unauthorised character should venture to enjoy Nature beside him. But what was to be done? Supercilious looks, even frowning, would accomplish nothing; the Sardonic visage was not to be frowned into the smallest terror. The Magister wrote to the landlord, demanding that this nuisance should be abated. Richter, with a praiseworthy love of peace, wrote to the Magister, promising to do what he could: he would not approach his (the Magister's) house so near as last night; would walk only in the evenings and mornings, and thereby for most part keep out of sight the apparel 'which convenience, health and poverty had prescribed for him.' These were fair conditions of a boundary-treaty; but the Magister interpreted them in too literal a sense, and soon found reason to complain that they had been infringed. He again took pen and ink, and in peremptory language represented that Paul had actually come past a certain Statue, which, without doubt, stood within the debatable land; threatening him, therefore, with Herr Körner, the landlord's vengeance, and withal openly testifying his own contempt and just rage against him. Paul answered, also in writing, That he had nowise infringed his promise, this Statue, or any other Statue, having nothing to do with it; but that now he did altogether revoke said promise, and would henceforth walk whensoever and wheresoever seemed good to him, seeing he too paid for the privilege. 'To me,' observed he, 'Herr Körner is not dreadful (*fürchterlich*);' and for the Magister himself he put down these remarkable words: 'You despise my mean name; *nevertheless take note of it; for you will not have done the latter long, till the former will not be in*

your power to do: I speak ambiguously, that I may not speak arrogantly.' Be it noted, at the same time, that with a noble spirit of accommodation, Richter proposed yet new terms of treaty; which being accepted, he, pursuant thereto, with bag and baggage forthwith evacuated the garden, and returned to his 'town-room at the Three Roses, in Peterstrasse;' glorious in retreat, and 'leaving his Paradise,' as Herr Otto with some conceit remarks, 'no less guiltlessly than voluntarily, for a certain bareness of breast and neck; whereas our First Parents were only allowed to retain theirs so long as they felt themselves innocent in total nudity.' What the Magister thought of the 'mean name' some years afterwards, we do not learn.

But if such tragical things went on in Leipzig, how much more when he went down to Hof in the holidays, where, at any rate, the Richters stood in slight esteem! It will surprise our readers to learn that Paul, with the mildest-tempered pertinacity, resisted all expostulations of friends, and persecutions of foes, in this great cause; and went about *à la Hamlet*, for the space of no less than seven years! He himself seemed partly sensible that it was affectation; but the man would have his humour out. 'On the whole,' says he, '*I hold the constant regard we pay, in all our actions, to the judgments of others, as the poison of our peace, our reason and our virtue.* At this slave-chain I have long filed, and I scarcely ever hope to break it entirely asunder. I wish to accustom myself to the censure of others, and *appear* a fool, that I may learn to endure fools.' So speaks the young Diogenes, embracing his frozen pillar, by way of 'exercitation;' as if the world did not give us frozen pillars enough in this kind, without our wilfully stepping aside to seek them! Better is that other maxim: 'He who differs from the world in important matters should the more carefully conform to it in indifferent ones.' Nay, by degrees, Richter himself saw into this; and having now proved satisfactorily enough that he could take his own way when he so pleased,—leaving, as is fair, the 'most sweet voices' to take theirs also,—he addressed to his friends (chiefly the Voigtland Literati above alluded to) the following circular:

'ADVERTISEMENT.

'The Undersigned begs to give notice, that whereas cropt hair has as many enemies as red hair, and said enemies of the hair are enemies likewise of the person it grows on; whereas farther, such a fashion is in no respect Christian, since otherwise Christian persons would have

adopted it; and whereas, especially, the Undersigned has suffered no less from his hair than Absalom did from his, though on contrary grounds; and whereas it has been notified that the public purposed to send him into his grave, since the hair grew there without scissors: he hereby gives notice that he will not push matters to such extremity. Be it known, therefore, to the nobility, gentry and a discerning public in general, that the Undersigned proposes, on Sunday next, to appear in various important streets (of Hof) with a short false cue; and with this cue as with a magnet, and cord-of-love, and magic-rod, to possess himself forcibly of the affections of all and sundry, be who they may.'

And thus ended 'gloriously,' as Herr Otto thinks, the long 'clothes-martyrdom;' from the course of which, besides its intrinsic comicality, we may learn two things: first, that Paul nowise wanted a due indifference to the popular wind, but, on fit or unfit occasion, could stand on his own basis stoutly enough, wrapping his cloak as himself listed; and secondly, that he had such a buoyant, elastic humour of spirit, that besides counter-pressure against Poverty, and Famine itself, there was still a clear overplus left to play fantastic tricks with, at which the angels could not indeed weep, but might well shake their heads and smile. We return to our history.

Several years before the date of this 'Advertisement,' namely in 1784, Paul, who had now determined on writing, with or without readers, to the end of the chapter, finding no furtherance in Leipzig but only hunger and hardship, bethought him that he might as well write in Hof beside his mother as there. His publishers, when he had any, were in other cities; and the two households, like two dying embers, might perhaps show some feeble point of red-heat between them, if cunningly laid together. He quitted Leipzig, after a three-years residence there; and fairly commenced housekeeping on his own score. Probably there is not in the whole history of Literature any record of a literary establishment like that at Hof; so ruggedly independent, so simple, not to say altogether unfurnished. Lawsuits had now done their work, and the Widow Richter, with her family, was living in a 'house containing one apartment.' Paul had no books, except 'twelve manuscript volumes of excerpts,' and the considerable library which he carried in his head; with which small resources, the public, especially as he had still no cue, could not well see what was to become of him. Two great furtherances, however, he had, of which the public took no sufficient note: a real Head on his shoulders, not, as is more common, a mere hat-wearing empty *effigies* of a

head; and the strangest, stoutest, indeed a quite noble Heart within him. Here, then, he could, as is the duty of man, 'prize his existence more than his manner of existence,' which latter was, indeed, easily enough disesteemed. Come of it what might, he determined, on his own strength, to try issues to the uttermost with Fortune; nay, while fighting like a very Ajax against her, to 'keep laughing in her face till she too burst into laughter, and ceased frowning at him.' He would nowise slacken in his Authorship, therefore, but continued stubbornly toiling, as at his right work, let the weather be sunny or snowy. For the rest, Poverty was written on the posts of his door, and within on every equipment of his existence; he that ran might read in large characters: "Good Christian people, you perceive that I have little money; what inference do you draw from it?" So hung the struggle, and as yet were no signs of victory for Paul. It was not till 1788 that he could find a publisher for his *Teufels Papieren;* and even then few readers. But no disheartenment availed with him; Authorship was once for all felt to be his true vocation; and by it he was minded to continue at all hazards. For a short while, he had been tutor in some family, and had again a much more tempting offer of the like sort, but he refused it, purposing henceforth to 'bring up no children but his own,—his books,' let Famine say to it what she pleaseth.

'With his mother,' says Otto, 'and at times also with several of his brothers, but always with one, he lived in a mean house, which had only a single apartment; and this went on even when,—after the appearance of the *Mümien*,—his star began to rise, ascending higher and higher, and never again declining. * * *

'As Paul, in the characters of Walt and Vult* (it is his direct statement in these Notes), meant to depict himself; so it may be remarked, that in the delineation of Lenette, his Mother stood before his mind, at the period when this down-pressed and humiliated woman began to gather heart, and raise herself up again;† seeing she could no longer

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* *Gottwalt* and *Quoddeusvult*, two Brothers (see Paul's *Flegeljahre*) of the most opposite temperaments: the former a still, soft-hearted, tearful enthusiast; the other a madcap humorist, honest at bottom, but bursting out on all hands with the strangest explosions, speculative and practical.

† 'Quite up, indeed, she could never more rise; and in silent humility, avoiding any loud expression of satisfaction, she lived to enjoy, with timorous gladness, the delight of seeing her son's worth

doubt the truth of his predictions, that Authorship must and would prosper with him. She now the more busily, in one and the same room where Paul was writing and studying, managed the household operations; cooking, washing, scouring, handling the broom, and these being finished, spinning cotton. Of the painful income earned by this latter employment she kept a written account. One such revenue-book, under the title *Was ich ersponnen* (Earned by spinning), which extends from March 1793 to September 1794, is still in existence. The produce of March, the first year, stands entered there as 2 florins, 51 kreutzers, 3 pfennigs' (somewhere about four shillings!); 'that of April,' etc.; 'at last, that of September 1794, 2 fl. 1 kr.; and on the last page of the little book stands marked, that Samuel (the youngest son) had, on the 9th of this same September, got new boots, which cost 3 thalers,'—almost a whole quarter's revenue!

Considering these things, how mournful would it have seemed to Paul that Bishop Dogbolt could not get translated, because of Politics; and the too high-souled Viscount Plumcake; thwarted in courtship, was seized with a perceptible dyspepsia!

We have dwelt the longer on this portion of Paul's history, because we reckon it interesting in itself; and that if the spectacle of a great man struggling with adversity be a fit one for the gods to look down on, much more must it be so for mean fellow-mortals to look up to. For us in Literary England, above all, such conduct as Richter's has a peculiar interest in these times; the interest of entire novelty. Of all literary phenomena, that of a literary man daring to believe that he is *poor*, may be regarded as the rarest. Can a man without capital actually open his lips and speak to mankind? Had he no landed property, then; no connexion with the higher classes; did he not even keep a gig? By these documents it would appear so. This was not a nobleman, nor gentleman, nor gigman;* but simply a man!

On the whole, what a wondrous spirit of gentility does

publicly recognised, and his acquaintance sought by the most influential men, and herself too honoured on this account, as she had never before been.'

* In Thurtell's trial (says the *Quarterly Review*) occurred the following colloquy: '*Q.* What sort of person was Mr. Weare? *A.* He was always a respectable person. *Q.* What do you mean by respectable? *A.* He kept a gig.'—Since then we have seen a '*Defensio Gigmanica*, or Apology for the Gigmen of Great Britain,' composed not without eloquence, and which we hope one day to prevail on our friend, a man of some whims, to give to the public.

animate our British Literature at this era! We have no Men of Letters now, but only Literary Gentlemen. Samuel Johnson was the last that ventured to appear in that former character, and support himself on his own legs, without any crutches, purchased or stolen: rough old Samuel, the last of all the Romans! Time was, when in English Literature, as in English Life, the comedy of 'Every Man in his Humour' was daily enacted among us; but now the poor French word, French in every sense, '*Qu'en dira-t-on?*' spellbinds us all, and we have nothing for it but to drill and cane each other into one uniform, regimental 'nation of gentlemen.' 'Let him who would write heroic poems,' said Milton, 'make his life a heroic poem.' Let him who would write heroic poems, say we, put money in his purse; or if he have no gold-money, let him put in copper-money, or pebbles, and chink with it as with true metal, in the ears of mankind, that they may listen to him. Herein does the secret of good writing now consist, as that of good living has always done. When we first visited Grub-street, and with bared head did reverence to the genius of the place, with a "*Salve, magna parens!*" we were astonished to learn on inquiry, that the Authors did not dwell there now, but had all removed years ago to a sort of 'High Life below Stairs,' far in the West. For why, what remedy was there; did not the wants of the age require it? How can men write without High Life; and how, except below Stairs, as Shoulder-knot, or as talking Katerfelto, or by second-hand communication with these two, can the great body of men acquire any knowledge thereof? Nay has not the Atlantis, or true Blissful Island of Poesy, been, in all times, understood to lie Westward, though never rightly discovered till now? Our great fault with writers used to be, not that they were intrinsically more or less completed Dolts, with no eye or ear for the 'open secret' of the world, or for anything save the 'open display' of the world,—for its gilt ceilings, marketable pleasures, war-chariots, and all manner, to the highest manner, of Lord-Mayor shows, and Guildhall dinners, and their own small part and lot therein; but the head and front of their offence lay in this, that they had not 'frequented the society of the upper classes.' And now, with our improved age, and this so universal extension of 'High Life below Stairs,' what a blessed change has been introduced; what benign consequences will follow therefrom!

One consequence has already been a degree of Dapperism and Dilettantism, and rickety Debility, unexampled in the

history of Literature, and enough of itself to make us 'the envy of surrounding nations;' for hereby the literary man, once so dangerous to the quiescence of society, has now become perfectly innoxious, so that a look will quail him, and he can be tied hand and foot by a spinster's thread. Hope there is, that henceforth neither Church nor State will be put in jeopardy by Literature. The old literary man, as we have said, stood on his own legs; had a whole heart within him, and might be provoked into many things. But the new literary man, on the other hand, cannot stand at all, save in stays; he must first gird up his weak sides with the whalebone of a certain fashionable, knowing, half-squirarchal air,—be it inherited, bought, or, as is more likely, borrowed or stolen, whalebone; and herewith he stands a little without collapsing. If the man now twang his jew's-harp to please the children, what is to be feared from him; what more is to be required of him?

Seriously speaking, we must hold it a remarkable thing that every Englishman should be a 'gentleman;' that in so democratic a country, our common title of honour, which all men assert for themselves, should be one which professedly depends on station, on accidents rather than on qualities; or at best, as Coleridge interprets it, 'on a certain indifference to money matters,' which certain indifference again must be wise or mad, you would think, exactly as one possesses much money, or possesses little! We suppose it must be the commercial genius of the nation, counteracting and suppressing its political genius; for the Americans are said to be still more notable in this respect than we. Now, what a hollow, windy vacuity of internal character this indicates; how, in place of a rightly-ordered heart, we strive only to exhibit a full purse; and all pushing, rushing, elbowing on towards a false aim, the courtier's kibes are more and more galled by the toe of the peasant: and on every side, instead of Faith, Hope and Charity, we have Neediness, Greediness and Vainglory; all this is palpable enough. Fools that we are! Why should we wear our knees to horn, and sorrowfully beat our breasts, praying day and night to Mammon, who, if he would even hear us, has almost nothing to give? For, granting that the deaf brute-god were to relent for our sacrificings; to change our gilt brass into solid gold, and instead of hungry actors of rich gentility, make us all in very deed Rothschild-Howards tomorrow, what good were it? Are we not already denizens of this wondrous England, with its high Shakspeares and Hampdens; nay, of this wondrous

Universe, with its Galaxies and Eternities, and unspeakable Splendours, that we should so worry and scramble, and tear one another in pieces, for some acres (nay, still oftener, for the *show* of some acres), more or less, of clay property, the largest of which properties, the Sutherland itself, is invisible even from the Moon? Fools that we are! To dig and bore like groundworms in those acres of ours, even if we have acres; and far from beholding and enjoying the heavenly Lights, not to know of them except by unheeded and unbelieved report! Shall certain pounds sterling that we may have in the Bank of England, or the ghosts of certain pounds that we would fain seem to have, hide from us the treasures we are all born to in this the 'City of God'?

> My inheritance how wide and fair;
> TIME is my estate, to TIME I'm heir!

But, leaving the money-changers, and honour-hunters, and gigmen of every degree, to their own wise ways, which they will not alter, we must again remark as a singular circumstance, that the same spirit should, to such an extent, have taken possession of Literature also. This is the eye of the world; enlightening all, and instead of the shows of things unfolding to us things themselves: has the eye too gone blind; has the Poet and Thinker adopted the philosophy of the Grocer and Valet in Livery? Nay, let us hear Lord Byron himself on the subject. Some years ago, there appeared in the Magazines, and to the admiration of most editorial gentlemen, certain extracts from Letters of Lord Byron's, which carried this philosophy to rather a high pitch. His Lordship, we recollect, mentioned, that 'all rules for Poetry were not worth a d—n' (saving and excepting, doubtless, the ancient Rule-of-Thumb, which must still have place here); after which aphorism, his Lordship proceeded to state that the great ruin of all British Poets sprang from a simple source; their exclusion from High Life in London, excepting only some shape of that High Life below Stairs, which, however, was nowise adequate: he himself and Thomas Moore were perfectly familiar in such upper life; he by birth, Moore by happy accident, and so they could both write Poetry; the others were not familiar, and so could not write it.—Surely it is fast growing time that all this should be drummed out of our Planet, and forbidden to return.

Richter, for his part, was quite excluded from the West-end of Hof: for Hof too has its West-end; 'every mortal longs

for his parade-place; would still wish, at banquets, to be master of some seat or other, wherein to overtop this or that plucked goose of the neighbourhood.' So poor Richter could only be admitted to the West-end of the Universe, where truly he had a very superior establishment. The legal, clerical and other conscript fathers of Hof might, had they so inclined, have lent him a few books, told or believed some fewer lies of him, and thus positively and negatively shown the young adventurer many a little service; but they inclined to none of these things, and happily he was enabled to do without them. Gay, gentle, frolicsome as a lamb, yet strong, forbearant and royally courageous as a lion, he worked along, amid the scouring of kettles, the hissing of frying-pans, the hum of his mother's wheel;—and it is not without a proud feeling that our reader (for he too is a man) hears of victory being at last gained, and of Works, which the most reflective nation in Europe regards as classical, being written under such accompaniments.

However, it is at this lowest point of the Narrative that Herr Otto for the present stops short; leaving us only the assurance that better days are coming: so that concerning the whole ascendant and dominant portion of Richter's history, we are left to our own resources; and from these we have only gathered some scanty indications, which may be summed up with a very disproportionate brevity. It appears that the *Unsichtbare Loge* (Invisible Lodge), sent forth from the Hof spinning-establishment in 1793, was the first of his works that obtained any decisive favour. A long trial of faith; for the man had now been besieging the literary citadel upwards of ten years, and still no breach visible! With the appearance of *Hesperus*, another wondrous Novel, which proceeded from the same 'single apartment,' in 1796, the siege may be said to have terminated by storm; and Jean Paul, whom the most knew not what in the world to think of, whom here and there a man of weak judgment had not even scrupled to declare half-mad, made it universally indubitable, that though encircled with dusky vapours, and shining out only in strange many-hued irregular bursts of flame, he was and would be one of the celestial Luminaries of his day and generation. The keen intellectual energy displayed in *Hesperus*, still more the nobleness of mind, the sympathy with Nature, the warm, impetuous, yet pure and lofty delineations of Friendship and Love; in a less degree perhaps, the wild boisterous humour that everywhere prevails in it, secured Richter not only admirers, but personal well-wishers in all

quarters of his country. Gleim, for example, though then eighty years of age, and among the last survivors of a quite different school, could not contain himself with rapture. 'What a divine genius (*Gotlgenius*),' thus wrote he some time afterwards, is our Friedrich Richter! I am reading his *Blumenstücke* for the second time: here is more than Shakspeare, said I, at fifty passages I have marked. What a divine genius! I wonder over the human head, out of which these streams, these brooks, these Rhine-falls, these Blandusian fountains pour forth over human nature to make human nature humane; and if today I object to the plan, object to phrases, to words, I am contented with all tomorrow.' The kind lively old man, it appears, had sent him a gay letter, signed 'Septimus Fixlein,' with a present of money in it; to which Richter, with great heartiness, and some curiosity to penetrate the secret, made answer in this very *Blumenstücke;* and so erelong a joyful acquaintance and friendship was formed; Paul had visited Halberstadt, with warmest welcome, and sat for his picture there (an oil painting by Pfenninger), which is still to be seen in Gleim's *Ehrentempel* (Temple of Honour). About this epoch too, the Reviewing world, after a long conscientious silence, again opened its thick lips; and in quite another dialect; screeching out a rusty *Nunc Domine dimittas*, with considerable force of pipe, instead of its last monosyllabic and very unhandsome *grunt*. For the credit of our own guild, we could have wished that the Reviewing world had struck up its *Dimittas* a little sooner.

In 1797 the Widow Richter was taken away from the strange variable climate of this world,—we shall hope into a sunnier one; her kettles hung unscoured on the wall; and the spool, so often filled with her cotton-thread and wetted with her tears, revolved no more. Poor old weather-beaten, heavy-laden soul! And yet a light-beam from on high was in her also; and the 'nine shillings for Samuel's new boots' were more bounteous and more blessed than many a king's ransom. Nay, she saw before departing, that she, even she, had born a mighty man; and her early sunshine, long drowned in deluges, again looked out at evening with sweet farewell.

The Hof household being thus broken up, Richter for some years led a wandering life. In the course of this same 1797 we find him once more in Leipzig; and truly under far other circumstances than of old. For instead of silk-stockinged, shovel-hatted, but too imperious Magisters, that would not let

him occupy his own hired dog-hutch in peace, 'he here,' says Heinrich Döring,* 'became acquainted with the three Princesses, adorned with every charm of person and of mind, the daughters of the Duchess of Hildburghausen! The Duke, who also did justice to his extraordinary merits, conferred on him, some years afterwards, the title of *Legationsrath* (Councillor of Legation).' To Princes and Princesses, indeed, Jean Paul seems, ever henceforth, to have had what we should reckon a surprising access. For example:—'the social circles where the Duchess Amelia (of Weimar) was wont to assemble the most talented men, first, in Ettersburg, afterwards in Tiefurt;'—then the 'Duke of Meinungen at Coburg, who had with pressing kindness invited him;'—the Prince Primate Dalberg, who did much more than invite him;—late in life, 'the gifted Duchess Dorothea, in Lobichau, of which visit he has himself commemorated the festive days,' &c. &c.;—all which small matters, it appears to us, should be taken into consideration by that class of British philosophers, troublesome in many an intellectual tea-circle, who deduce the 'German bad taste' from our own old everlasting 'want of intercourse;' whereby, if it so seemed good to them, their tea, till some less self-evident proposition were started, might be 'consumed with a certain stately silence.'

But next year (1798) there came on Paul a far grander piece of good fortune than any of these; namely, a good wife; which, as Solomon has long ago recorded, is a 'good thing.' He had gone from Leipzig to Berlin, still busily writing; 'and during a longer residence in this latter city,' says Döring, 'Caroline Mayer, daughter of the Royal Prussian Privy Councillor and Professor of Medicine, Dr. John Andrew Mayer' (these are all his titles), 'gave him her hand; nay even,' continues the microscopic Döring, 'as is said in a public paper, bestowed on him (*aufdrückte*) the bride-kiss of her own accord.' What is still more astonishing, she is recorded to have been a 'chosen one of her sex,' one that, 'like a gentle, guardian, care-dispelling genius, went by his side through all his pilgrimage.'

Shortly after this great event, Paul removed with his new wife to Weimar, where he seems to have resided some years, in high favour with whatever was most illustrious in that city. His first impression on Schiller is characteristic enough. 'Of Hesperus,' thus writes Schiller, 'I have yet made no mention

* *Leben Jean Pauls.* Gotha, 1826.

to you. I found him pretty much what I expected; foreign, like a man fallen from the Moon; full of good will, and heartily inclined to see things about him, but without organ for seeing them. However, I have only spoken to him once, and so I can say little of him.'* In answer to which Goethe also expresses his love for Richter, but 'doubts whether in literary practice he will ever fall-in with them two, much as his theoretical creed inclined that way.' Hesperus proved to have more 'organ' than Schiller gave him credit for; nevertheless Goethe's doubt had not been unfounded. It was to Herder that Paul chiefly attached himself here; esteeming the others as high-gifted, friendly men, but only Herder as a teacher and spiritual father; of which latter relation, and the warm love and gratitude accompanying it on Paul's side, his writings give frequent proof. 'If Herder was not a Poet,' says he once, 'he was something more,—a Poem!' With Wieland too he stood on the friendliest footing, often walking out to visit him at Osmanstädt, whither the old man had now retired. Perhaps these years spent at Weimar, in close intercourse with so many distinguished persons, were, in regard to outward matters, among the most instructive of Richter's life: in regard to inward matters, he had already served, and with credit, a hard apprenticeship elsewhere. We must not forget to mention that *Titan*, one of his chief romances (published at Berlin in 1800), was written during his abode at Weimar; so likewise the *Flegeljahre* (Wild Oats); and the eulogy of *Charlotte Corday*, which last, though originally but a Magazine Essay, deserves notice for its bold eloquence, and the antique republican spirit manifested in it. With respect to *Titan*, which, together with its *Comic Appendix*, forms six very extraordinary volumes, Richter was accustomed, on all occasions, to declare it his masterpiece, and even the best he could ever hope to do; though there are not wanting readers who continue to regard *Hesperus* with preference. For ourselves, we have read *Titan* with a certain disappointment, after hearing so much of it; yet on the whole must incline to the Author's opinion. One day we hope to afford the British public some sketch of both these works, concerning which, it has been said, 'there is solid metal enough in them to fit-out whole circulating libraries, were it beaten into the usual filigree; and much which, attenuate it as we might no Quarterly Subscriber could well carry with him.' Richter's

* *Briefwechsel zwischen Schiller und Goethe* (Correspondence between Schiller and Goethe), b. ii. 77.

other Novels published prior to this period are, the *Invisible Lodge;* the *Siebenkäs* (or Flower Fruit and, Thorn Pieces); the *Life of Quintus Fixlein;* the *Jubelsenior* (Parson in Jubilee); *Jean Paul's Letters and Future History*, the *Dejeuner in Kuhschnappel*, the *Biographical Recreations under the Cranium of a Giantess*, scarcely belonging to this species. The Novels published afterwards, which we may as well catalogue here, are, the *Leben Fibels* (Life of Fibel); *Katzenbergers Badereise* (Katzenberger's Journey to the Bath); *Schmelzles Reise nach Flätz* (Schmelzle's Journey to Flätz); the *Comet*, named also *Nicholaus Margraf.*

It seems to have been about the year 1802, that Paul had a pension bestowed upon him by the *Fürst Primas* (Prince Primate) von Dalberg, a prelate famed for his munificence, whom we have mentioned above. What the amount was, we do not find specified, but only that it 'secured him the means of a comfortable life,' and was 'subsequently,' we suppose after the Prince Primate's decease, 'paid him by the King of Bavaria.' On the strength of which fixed revenue, Paul now established for himself a fixed household; selecting for this purpose, after various intermediate wanderings, the city of Baireuth, 'with its kind picturesque environment;' where, with only brief occasional excursions, he continued to live and write. We have heard that he was a man universally loved, as well as honoured there: a friendly, true and high-minded man; copious in speech, which was full of grave genuine humour; contented with simple people and simple pleasures; and himself of the simplest habits and wishes. He had three children; and a guardian angel, doubtless not without her flaws, yet a reasonable angel notwithstanding. For a man with such obdured Stoicism, like triple steel, round his breast; and of such gentle, deep-lying, ever-living springs of Love within it,—all this may well have made a happy life. Besides, Paul was of exemplary, unwearied diligence in his vocation; and so had, at all times, 'perennial, fire-proof Joys, namely Employments.' In addition to the latter part of the Novels named above, which, with the others, as all of them are more or less genuine poetical productions, we feel reluctant to designate even transiently by so despicable an English word,—his philosophical and critical performances, especially the *Vorschule der Aesthetik* (Introduction to Æsthetics), and the *Levana* (Doctrine of Education), belong wholly to Baireuth; not to enumerate a multitude of miscellaneous writings (on moral, literary, scientific subjects, but always in a humorous,

fantastic, poetic dress), which of themselves might have made the fortune of no mean man. His heart and conscience, as well as his head and hand, were in the work; from which no temptation could withdraw him. 'I hold my duty,' says he in these Biographical Notes, 'not to lie in enjoying or acquiring, but in writing,—whatever time it may cost, whatever money may be forborne,—nay whatever pleasure; for example, that of seeing Switzerland, which nothing but the sacrifice of time forbids.'—'I deny myself my evening meal (*Vesperessen*) in my eagerness to work; but the interruptions by my children I cannot deny myself.' And again: 'A Poet, who presumes to give poetic delight, should contemn and willingly forbear all enjoyments, the sacrifice of which affects not his creative powers; that so he may perhaps delight a century and a whole people.' In Richter's advanced years, it was happy for him that he could say: 'When I look at what has been made out of me, I must thank God that I paid no heed to external matters, neither to time nor toil, nor profit nor loss; the thing is there, and the instruments that did it I have forgotten, and none else knows them. In this wise has the unimportant series of moments been changed into something higher than remains.' —'I have described so much,' says he elsewhere, 'and I die without ever having seen Switzerland, and the Ocean, and so many other sights. But the Ocean of Eternity I shall in no case fail to see.'

A heavy stroke fell on him in the year 1821, when his only son, a young man of great promise, died at the University. Paul lost not his composure; but was deeply, incurably wounded. 'Epistolary lamentations on my misfortune,' says he, 'I read unmoved, for the bitterest is to be heard within myself, and I must shut the ears of my soul to it; but a single new trait of Max's fair nature opens the whole lacerated heart asunder again, and it can only drive its blood into the eyes.' New personal sufferings awaited him: a decay of health, and what to so indefatigable a reader and writer was still worse, a decay of eyesight, increasing at last to almost total blindness. This too he bore with his old steadfastness, cheerfully seeking what help was to be had; and when no hope of help remained, still cheerfully labouring at his vocation, though in sickness and in blindness.* Dark without, he

* He begins a letter applying for spectacles (August 1824) in these terms: 'Since last winter, my eyes (the left had already, without cataract, been long half-blind, and, like Reviewers and *Littérateurs*,

was inwardly full of light; busied on his favourite theme, the *Immortality of the Soul;* when (on the 14th of November 1825) Death came, and Paul's work was all accomplished, and that great question settled for him on far higher and indisputable evidence. The unfinished Volume (which under the title of *Selina* we now have) was carried on his bier to the grave; for his funeral was public, and in Baireuth, and elsewhere, all possible honour was done to his memory.

In regard to Paul's character as a man we have little to say, beyond what the facts of this Narrative have already said more plainly than in words. We learn from all quarters, in one or the other dialect, that the pure, high morality which adorns his writings stamped itself also on his life and actions. 'He was a tender husband and father,' says Döring, 'and goodness itself towards his friends and all that was near him.' The significance of such a spirit as Richter's, practically manifested in such a life, is deep and manifold, and at this era will merit careful study. For the present, however, we must leave it, in this degree of clearness, to the reader's own consideration; another and still more immediately needful department of our task still remains for us.

Richter's intellectual and Literary character is, perhaps, in a singular degree the counterpart and image of his practical and moral character: his Works seem to us a more than usually faithful transcript of his mind; written with great warmth direct from the heart, and like himself, wild, strong, original, sincere. Viewed under any aspect, whether as Thinker, Moralist, Satirist, Poet, he is a phenomenon; a vast, many-sided, tumultuous, yet noble nature; for faults as for merits, 'Jean Paul the Unique.' In all departments, we find in him a subduing force; but a lawless, untutored, as it were half-savage force. Thus, for example, few understandings known to us are of a more irresistible character than Richter's; but its strength is a natural, unarmed, Orson-like strength: he does not cunningly undermine his subject, and lay it open, by syllogistic implements or any rule of art; but he crushes it to pieces in his arms, he treads it asunder, not without gay triumph, under his feet; and so in almost monstrous fashion, yet with piercing clearness,

read nothing but title-pages) have been seized by a daily-increasing Night-Ultra and Enemy-to-Light, who, did not I withstand him, would shortly drive me into the Orcus of Amaurosis. Then, *Addio, opera omnia!*' *Döring*, p. 32.

lays bare the inmost heart and core of it to all eyes. In passion again, there is the same wild vehemence: it is a voice of softest pity, of endless boundless wailing, a voice as of Rachel weeping for her children;—or the fierce bellowing of lions amid savage forests. Thus too, he not only loves Nature, but he revels in her; plunges into her infinite bosom, and fills his whole heart to intoxication with her charms. He tells us that he was wont to study, to write, almost to live, in the open air; and no skyey aspect was so dismal that it altogether wanted beauty for him. We know of no Poet with so deep and passionate and universal a feeling towards Nature: 'from the solemn phases of the starry heaven to the simple floweret of the meadow, his eye and his heart are open for her charms and her mystic meanings.' But what most of all shadows forth the inborn, essential temper of Paul's mind, is the sportfulness, the wild heartfelt Humour, which, in his highest as in his lowest moods, ever exhibits itself as a quite inseparable ingredient. His Humour, with all its wildness, is of the gravest and kindliest, a genuine Humour; 'consistent with utmost earnestness, or rather, inconsistent with the want of it.' But on the whole, it is impossible for him to write in other than a humorous manner, be his subject what it may. His Philosophical Treatises, nay, as we have seen, his Autobiography itself, everything that comes from him, is encased in some quaint fantastic framing; and roguish eyes (yet with a strange sympathy in the matter, for his Humour, as we said, is heartfelt and true) look out on us through many a grave delineation. In his Novels, above all, this is ever an indispensable quality, and, indeed, announces itself in the very entrance of the business, often even on the title-page. Think, for instance, of that *Selection from the Papers of the Devil; Hesperus*, OR *the Dog-post-days; Siebenkäs's Wedded-life, Death* AND *Nuptials!*

'The first aspect of these peculiarities,' says one of Richter's English critics, 'cannot prepossess us in his favour; we are too forcibly reminded of theatrical claptraps and literary quackery: nor on opening one of the works themselves is the case much mended. Piercing gleams of thought do not escape us; singular truths, conveyed in a form as singular; grotesque, and often truly ludicrous delineations; pathetic, magnificent, far-sounding passages; effusions full of wit, knowledge and imagination, but difficult to bring under any rubric whatever; all the elements, in short, of a glorious intellect, but dashed together in such wild arrangement that their order seems the very ideal of confusion. The style and structure of the book appear

alike incomprehensible. The narrative is every now and then suspended, to make way for some "Extra-leaf," some wild digression upon any subject but the one in hand; the language groans with indescribable metaphors, and allusions to all things human and divine; flowing onwards, not like a river, but like an inundation; circling in complex eddies, chafing and gurgling, now this way, now that, till the proper current sinks out of view amid the boundless uproar. We close the work with a mingled feeling of astonishment, oppression and perplexity; and Richter stands before us in brilliant cloudy vagueness, a giant mass of intellect, but without form, beauty or intelligible purpose.

'To readers who believe that intrinsic is inseparable from superficial excellence, and that nothing can be good or beautiful which is not to be seen-through in a moment, Richter can occasion little difficulty. They admit him to be a man of vast natural endowments, but he is utterly uncultivated, and without command of them; full of monstrous affectation, the very high-priest of Bad Taste; knows not the art of writing, scarcely that there is such an art; an insane visionary, floating forever among baseless dreams that hide the firm earth from his view; an intellectual Polyphemus, in short, a *monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens*, (carefully adding), *cui lumen ademptum;* and they close their verdict reflectively with his own praiseworthy maxim: "Providence has given to the English the empire of the sea, to the French that of the land, to the Germans that of—the air."

'In this way the matter is adjusted; briefly, comfortably and wrong. The casket was difficult to open: did we know, by its very shape, that there was nothing in it, that so we should cast it into the sea? Affectation is often singularity, but singularity is not always affectation. If the nature and condition of a man be really and truly, not conceitedly and untruly, singular, so also will his manner be, so also ought it to be. Affectation is the product of Falsehood, a heavy sin, and the parent of numerous heavy sins; let it be severely punished, but not too lightly imputed. Scarcely any mortal is absolutely free from it, neither most probably is Richter; but it is in minds of another substance than his that it grows to be the ruling product. Moreover, he is actually not a visionary; but, with all his visions, will be found to see the firm Earth, in its whole figures and relations, much more clearly than thousands of such critics, who too probably can see nothing else. Far from being untrained or uncultivated, it will surprise these persons to discover that few men have studied the art of writing, and many other arts besides, more carefully than he; that his *Vorschule der Aesthetik* abounds with deep and sound maxims of criticism; in the course of which many complex works, his own among others, are rigidly and justly tried, and even the graces and minutest qualities of style are by no means overlooked or unwisely handled.

'Withal, there is something in Richter that incites us to a second, to a third perusal. His works are hard to understand, but they always

have a meaning, often a true and deep one. In our closer, more comprehensive glance, their truth steps forth with new distinctness, their error dissipates and recedes, passes into veniality, often even into beauty; and at last the thick haze which encircled the form of the writer melts away, and he stands revealed to us in his own steadfast features, a colossal spirit, a lofty and original thinker, a genuine poet, a high-minded, true and most amiable man.

'I have called him a colossal spirit, for this impression continues with us: to the last we figure him as something gigantic: for all the elements of his structure are vast, and combined together in living and life-giving, rather than in beautiful or symmetrical order. His Intellect is keen, impetuous, far-grasping, fit to rend in pieces the stubbornest materials, and extort from them their most hidden and refractory truth. In his Humour he sports with the highest and the lowest, he can play at bowls with the Sun and Moon. His Imagination opens for us the Land of Dreams; we sail with him through the boundless Abyss; and the secrets of Space, and Time, and Life, and Annihilation, hover round us in dim, cloudy forms; and darkness, and immensity, and dread encompass and overshadow us. Nay, in handling the smallest matter, he works it with the tools of a giant. A common truth is wrenched from its old combinations, and presented to us in new, impassable, abysmal contrast with its opposite error. A trifle, some slender character, some jest, or quip, or spiritual toy, is shaped into most quaint, yet often truly living form; but shaped somehow as with the hammer of Vulcan, with three strokes that might have helped to forge an Ægis. The treasures of his mind are of a similar description with the mind itself; his knowledge is gathered from all the kingdoms of Art, and Science, and Nature, and lies round him in huge unwieldly heaps. His very language is Titanian; deep, strong, tumultuous; shining with a thousand hues, fused from a thousand elements, and winding in labyrinthic mazes.

'Among Richter's gifts,' continues this critic, 'the first that strikes us as truly great is his Imagination; for he loves to dwell in the loftiest and most solemn provinces of thought: his works abound with mysterious allegories, visions and typical adumbrations; his Dreams, in particular, have a gloomy vastness, broken here and there by wild far-darting splendour; and shadowy forms of meaning rise dimly from the bosom of the void Infinite. Yet, if I mistake not, Humour is his ruling quality, the quality which lives most deeply in his inward nature, and most strongly influences his manner of being. In this rare gift, for none is rarer than true Humour, he stands unrivalled in his own country, and among late writers in every other. To describe Humour is difficult at all times, and would perhaps be more than usually difficult in Richter's case. Like all his other qualities, it is vast, rude, irregular; often perhaps overstrained and extravagant; yet, fundamentally, it is genuine Humour, the Humour of Cervantes and Sterne; the product not of Contempt, but of Love, not of superficial distortion of

natural forms, but of deep though playful sympathy with all forms of Nature. * * *

'So long as Humour will avail him, his management even of higher and stronger characters may still be pronounced successful; but wherever Humour ceases to be applicable, his success is more or less imperfect. In the treatment of heroes proper he is seldom completely happy. They shoot into rugged exaggeration in his hands; their sensibility becomes too copious and tearful, their magnanimity too fierce, abrupt and thorough-going. In some few instances they verge towards absolute failure: compared with their less ambitious brethren, they are almost of a vulgar cast; with all their brilliancy and vigour, too like that positive, determinate, volcanic class of personages whom we meet with so frequently in Novels; they call themselves Men, and do their utmost to prove the assertion, but they cannot make us believe it; for, after all their vapouring and storming, we see well enough that they are but Engines, with no more life than the Free-thinkers' model in *Martinus Scriblerus*, the Nuremberg Man, who operated by a combination of pipes and levers, and though he could breathe and digest perfectly, and even reason as well as most country parsons, was made of wood and leather. In the general conduct of such histories and delineations, Richter seldom appears to advantage: the incidents are often startling and extravagant; the whole structure of the story has a rugged, broken, huge, artificial aspect, and will not assume the air of truth. Yet its chasms are strangely filled up with the costliest materials; a world, a universe of wit, and knowledge, and fancy, and imagination has sent its fairest products to adorn the edifice; the rude and rent Cyclopean walls are resplendent with jewels and beaten gold; rich stately foliage screens it, the balmiest odours encircle it; we stand astonished if not captivated, delighted if not charmed, by the artist and his art.'

With these views, so far as they go, we see little reason to disagree. There is doubtless a deeper meaning in the matter, but perhaps this is not the season for evolving it. To depict, with true scientific accuracy, the essential purport and character of Richter's genius and literary endeavour; how it originated, whither it tends, how it stands related to the general tendencies of the world in this age; above all, what is its worth and want of worth to ourselves,—may one day be a necessary problem; but, as matters actually stand, would be a difficult and no very profitable one. The English public has not yet seen Richter; and must know him before it can judge him. For us, in the present circumstances, we hold it a more promising plan to exhibit some specimens of his workmanship itself, than to attempt describing it anew or better. The general outline of his intellectual aspect, as sketched in few words by the writer already quoted, may

stand here by way of preface to these Extracts: as was the case above, whatever it may want, it contains nothing that we dissent from.

'To characterise Jean Paul's Works,' says he, 'would be difficult after the fullest inspection: to describe them to English readers would be next to impossible. Whether poetical, philosophical, didactic, fantastic, they seem all to be emblems, more or less complete, of the singular mind where they originated. As a whole, the first perusal of them, more particularly to a foreigner, is almost infallibly offensive; and neither their meaning nor their no-meaning is to be discerned without long and sedulous study. They are a tropical wilderness, full of endless tortuosities; but with the fairest flowers and the coolest fountains; now overarching us with high umbrageous gloom, now opening in long gorgeous vistas. We wander through them, enjoying their wild grandeur; and, by degrees, our half-contemptuous wonder at the Author passes into reverence and love. His face was long hid from us; but we see him at length in the firm shape of spiritual manhood; a vast and most singular nature, but vindicating his singular nature by the force, the beauty and benignity which pervade it. In fine, we joyfully accept him for what he is, and was meant to be. The graces, the polish, the sprightly elegancies which belong to men of lighter make, we cannot look for or demand from him. His movement is essentially slow and cumbrous, for he advances not with one faculty, but with a whole mind; with intellect, and pathos, and wit, and humour, and imagination, moving onward like a mighty host, motley, ponderous, irregular, irresistible. He is not airy, sparkling and precise: but deep, billowy and vast. The melody of his nature is not expressed in common note-marks, or written down by the critical gamut: for it is wild and manifold; its voice is like the voice of cataracts, and the sounding of primeval forests To feeble ears it is discord; but to ears that understand it, deep majestic music.'

As our first specimen, which also may serve for proof that Richter, in adopting his own extraordinary style, did it with clear knowledge of what excellence in style, and the various kinds and degrees of excellence therein, properly signified, we select, from his *Vorschule der Aesthetik* (above mentioned and recommended), the following miniature sketches: the reader acquainted with the persons, will find these sentences, as we believe, strikingly descriptive and exact.

'Visit Herder's creations, where Greek life-freshness and Hindoo life-weariness are wonderfully blended: you walk, as it were, amid moonshine, into which the red dawn is already falling; but one hidden sun is the painter of both.'

'Similar, but more compacted into periods, is Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi's vigorous, German-hearted prose; musical in every sense, for even his images are often derived from tones. The rare union between cutting force of intellectual utterance, and infinitude of sentiment, gives us the tense metallic chord with its soft tones.'

'In Goethe's prose, on the other hand, his fixedness of form gives us the Memnon's-tone. A plastic rounding, a pictorial determinateness, which even betrays the manual artist, make his works a fixed still gallery of figures and bronze statues.'

'Luther's prose is a half-battle; few deeds are equal to his words.'

'Klopstock's prose frequently evinces a sharpness of diction bordering on poverty of matter; a quality peculiar to Grammarians, who most of all know *distinctly*, but least of all know *much*. From want of matter, one is apt to think too much of language. New views of the world, like these other poets, Klopstock scarcely gave. Hence the naked winter-boughs, in his prose; the multitude of circumscribed propositions; the brevity; the return of the same small sharp-cut figures, for instance, of the Resurrection as of a Harvest-field.'

'The perfection of pomp-prose we find in Schiller: what the utmost splendour of reflection in images, in fulness and antithesis can give, he gives. Nay, often he plays on the poetic strings with so rich and jewel-loaded a hand, that the sparkling mass disturbs, if not the playing, yet our hearing of it.' *

That Richter's own playing and painting differed widely from all of these, the reader has already heard, and may now convince himself. Take, for example, the following of a fair-weather scene, selected from a thousand such that may be found in his writings; nowise as the best, but simply as the briefest. It is in the May season, the last evening of Spring:

'Such a May as the present (of 1794) Nature has not in the memory of man—begun; for this is but the fifteenth of it. People of reflection have long been vexed once every year, that our German singers should indite May-songs, since several other months deserve such a poetical Night-music better; and I myself have often gone so far as to adopt the idiom of our market-women, and instead of May butter to say June butter, as also June, March, April songs. But thou, kind May of this year, thou deservest to thyself all the songs which were ever made on thy rude namesakes!—By Heaven! when I now issue from the wavering chequered acacia-grove of the Castle, in which I am writing this Chapter, and come forth into the broad living light, and look up to the warming Heaven, and over its Earth budding out beneath it,—the Spring rises before me like a vast full cloud, with a splendour of blue and green. I see the Sun standing amid roses in the western sky, into

* *Vorschule*, s. 545.

which he has *thrown his ray-brush wherewith he has today been painting the Earth;*—and when I look round a little in our picture-exhibition,—his enamelling is still hot on the mountains; on the moist chalk of the moist earth, the flowers, full of sap-colours, are laid out to dry, and the forget-me-not, with miniature colours; under the varnish of the streams the skyey Painter has pencilled his own eye; and the clouds, like a decoration-painter, he has touched-off with wild outlines and single tints; and so he stands at the border of the Earth, and looks back on his stately Spring, whose robe-folds are valleys, whose breast-bouquet is gardens, and whose blush is a vernal evening, and who, when she arises, will be—Summer!'*

Or the following, in which moreover are two happy living figures, a bridegroom and a bride on their marriage-day:

'He led her from the crowded dancing-room into the cool evening. Why does the evening, does the night, put warmer love in our hearts? Is it the nightly pressure of helplessness; or is it the exalting separation from the turmoils of life, that veiling of the world, in which for the soul nothing then remains but souls:—is it therefore that the letters in which the loved name stands written on our spirit appear, like phosphorus writing, by night, *on fire*, while by day in their *cloudy* traces they but smoke?

'He walked with his bride into the castle-garden: she hastened quickly through the Castle, and past its servants'-hall, where the fair flowers of her young life had been crushed broad and dry under a long dreary pressure; and her soul expanded and breathed in the free open garden, on whose flowery soil Destiny had cast forth the first seeds of the blossoms which today were gladdening her existence. Still Eden! Green, flower-chequered *chiaroscuro!*—The moon is sleeping under ground like a dead one; but beyond the garden the sun's red evening-clouds have fallen down like rose-leaves; and the evening-star, the brideman of the sun, hovers like a glancing butterfly above the rosy red, and, modest as a bride, deprives no single starlet of its light.

'The wandering pair arrived at the old gardener's hut; now standing locked and dumb, with dark windows in the light garden, like a fragment of the Past surviving in the Present. Bared twigs of trees were folding, with clammy half-formed leaves, over the thick inter-twisted tangles of the bushes. The Spring was standing, like a conqueror, with Winter at his feet. In the blue pond, now bloodless, a dusky evening-sky lay hollowed out; and the gushing waters were moistening the flower-beds. The silver sparks of stars were rising on the altar of the East, and falling down extinguished in the red-sea of the West.

'The wind whirred, like a night-bird, louder through the trees; and

* *Fixlein*, z. 11.

gave tones to the acacia-grove, and the tones called to the pair who had first become happy within it: "Enter, new mortal pair, and think of what is past, and of my withering and your own; and be holy as Eternity, and weep, not for joy only, but for gratitude also!" * * *

'They reached the blazing, rustling marriage-house, but their softened hearts sought stillness; and a foreign touch, as in the blossoming vine, would have disturbed the flower-nuptials of their souls. They turned rather, and winded up into the churchyard to preserve their mood. Majestic on the groves and mountains stood the Night before man's heart, and made it also great. Over the white steeple-obelisk, the sky rested bluer and darker; and behind it wavered the withered summit of the Maypole with faded flag. The son noticed his father's grave, on which the wind was opening and shutting with harsh noise the small lid on the metal cross, to let the year of his death be read on the brass plate within. An overpowering grief seized his heart with violent streams of tears, and drove him to the sunk hillock; and he led his bride to the grave, and said: "Here sleeps he, my good father; in his thirty-second year he was carried hither to his long rest. O thou good dear father, couldst thou today but see the happiness of thy son, like my mother! But thy eyes are empty, and thy breast is full of ashes, and thou seest us not."—He was silent. The bride wept aloud; she saw the mouldering coffins of her parents open, and the two dead arise, and look round for their daughter, who had stayed so long behind them, forsaken on the earth. She fell on his neck and faltered: "O beloved, I have neither father nor mother, do not forsake me!"

'O thou who hast still a father and a mother, thank God for it on the day when thy soul is full of glad tears, and needs a bosom wherein to shed them. . . .

'And with this embracing at a father's grave, let this day of joy be holily concluded.'*

In such passages, slight as they are, we fancy an experienced eye will trace some features of originality, as well as of uncommonness: an open sense for Nature, a soft heart, a warm rich fancy, and here and there some under-current of Humour are distinctly enough discernible. Of this latter quality, which, as has been often said, forms Richter's grand characteristic, we would fain give our readers some correct notion; but see not well how it is to be done. Being genuine poetic humour, not drollery or vulgar caricature, it is like a fine essence, like a soul; we discover it only in whole works and delineations; as the soul is only to be seen in the living body, not in detached limbs and fragments. Richter's Humour takes a great variety

* *Fixlein*, z. 9.

of forms, some of them sufficiently grotesque and piebald; ranging from the light kindly-comic vein of Sterne in his *Trim* and *Uncle Toby* over all intermediate degrees, to the rugged grim farce-tragedy often manifested in Hogarth's pictures; nay, to still darker and wilder moods than this. Of the former sort are his characters of Fixlein, Schmelzle, Fibel: of the latter, his Vult, Giannozzo, Leibgeber, Schoppe, which last two are indeed one and the same. Of these, of the spirit that reigns in them, we should despair of giving other than the most inadequate and even incorrect idea, by any extracts or expositions that could possibly be furnished here. Not without reluctance we have accordingly renounced that enterprise; and must content ourselves with some 'Extraleaf,' or other separable passage; which, if it afford no emblem of Richter's Humour, may be, in these circumstances, our best approximation to such. Of the 'Extra-leaves' in *Hesperus* itself, a considerable volume might be formed, and truly one of the strangest. Most of them, however, are national; could not be apprehended without a commentary; and even then, much to their disadvantage, for Humour must be seen, not through a glass, but face to face. The following is nowise one of the best; but it turns on what we believe is a quite European subject, at all events is certainly an English one.

'*Extra-leaf on Daughter-full Houses.*

'The Minister's house was an open bookshop, the books in which (the daughters) you might read there, but could not take home with you. Though five other daughters were already standing in five private libraries, as wives, and one under the ground at Maienthal was sleeping off the child's-play of life, yet still in this daughter-warehouse there remained three gratis copies to be disposed of to good friends. The Minister was always prepared, in drawings from the office-lottery, to give his daughters as premiums to winners, and holders of the lucky ticket. Whom God gives an office, he also gives, if not sense for it, at least a wife. In a daughter-full house there must, as in the Church of St. Peter's, be *confessionals* for all nations, for all characters, for all faults; that the daughters may sit as confessoresses therein, and absolve from all, bachelorship only excepted. As a Natural-Philosopher, I have many times admired the wise methods of Nature for distributing daughters and plants: Is it not a fine arrangement, said I to the Natural-Historian Goeze, that Nature should have bestowed specially on young women, who for their growth require a rich mineralogical soil, some sort of hooking-apparatus, whereby to stick themselves on miserable marriage-cattle, that they may carry them to fat places?

Thus Linnæus,* as you know, observes that such seeds as can flourish only in fat earth are furnished with barbs, and so fasten themselves the better on grazing quadrupeds, which transport them to stalls and dung-hills. Strangely does Nature, by the wind,—which father and mother must raise,—scatter daughters and fir-seeds into the arable spots of the forest. Who does not remark the final cause here, and how Nature has equipped many a daughter with such and such charms, simply that some Peer, some mitred Abbot, Cardinal-deacon, appanaged Prince, or mere country Baron, may lay hold of said charmer, and in the character of Father or Brideman, hand her over ready-made to some gawk of the like sort, as a wife acquired by purchase? And do we find in bilberries a slighter attention on the part of Nature? Does not the same Linnæus notice, in the same treatise, that they too are cased in a nutritive juice to incite the Fox to eat them; after which the villain,—digest them he cannot,—in such sort as he may, becomes their sower?—

'O, my heart is more in earnest than you think; the parents anger me who are soul-brokers; the daughters sadden me who are made slave-negresses.—Ah, is it wonderful that these, who, in their West-Indian marketplace, must dance, laugh, speak, sing, till some lord of a plantation take them home with him,—that these, I say, should be as slavishly treated as they are sold and bought? Ye poor lambs!—And yet ye too are as bad as your sale-mothers and sale-fathers:—what is one to do with his enthusiasm for your sex, when one travels through German towns, where every heaviest-pursed, every longest-titled individual, were he second cousin to the Devil himself, can point with his finger to thirty houses, and say: "I know not, shall it be from the pearl-coloured, or the nut-brown, or the steel-green house, that I wed; open to customers are they all!"—How, my girls! Is your heart so little worth that you cut it, like old clothes, after any fashion, to fit any breast; and does it wax or shrink, then, like a Chinese ball, to fit itself into the ball-mould and marriage-ringcase of any male heart whatever? "Well, it must; unless we would sit at home, and grow Old Maids," answer they; whom I will not answer, but turn scornfully away from them, to address that same Old Maid in these words:

'"Forsaken, but patient one; misknown and mistreated! Think not of the times when thou hadst hope of better than the present are, and repent the noble pride of thy heart never! It is not always our duty to marry, but it always is our duty to abide by right, not to purchase happiness by loss of honour, not to avoid unweddedness by untruthfulness. Lonely, unadmired heroine! in thy last hour, when all Life and the bygone possessions and scaffoldings of Life shall crumble to pieces, ready to fall down; in that hour thou wilt look back on thy untenanted life; no children, no husband, no wet eyes will be there; but in the empty dusk one high, pure, angelic, smiling, beaming

* 'His *Amœn. Acad.*—The treatise on the Habitable Globe.'

Figure, godlike and mounting to the Godlike, will hover, and beckon thee to mount with her;—mount thou with her, the Figure is thy Virtue."'

We have spoken above, and warmly, of Jean Paul's Imagination, of his high devout feeling, which it were now a still more grateful part of our task to exhibit. But in this also our readers must content themselves with some imperfect glimpses. What religious opinions and aspirations he specially entertained, how that noblest portion of man's interest represented itself in such a mind, were long to describe, did we even know it with certainty. He hints somewhere that 'the soul, which by nature looks Heavenward, is without a Temple in this age;' in which little sentence the careful reader will decipher much.

'But there will come another era,' says Paul, 'when it shall be light, and man will awaken from his lofty dreams, and find—his dream still there, and that nothing is gone save his sleep.

'The stones and rocks, which two veiled Figures (Necessity and Vice), like Deucalion and Pyrrha, are casting behind them at Goodness, will themselves become men.

'And on the Western-gate (*Abendthor*, evening-gate) of this century stands written: Here is the way to Virtue and Wisdom; as on the Western-gate at Cherson stands the proud Inscription: Here is the way to Byzance.

'Infinite Providence, Thou wilt cause the day to dawn.

'But as yet struggles the twelfth-hour of the Night: nocturnal birds of prey are on the wing, spectres uproar, the dead walk, the living dream.'*

Connected with this, there is one other piece, which also, for its singular poetic qualities, we shall translate here. The reader has heard much of Richter's Dreams, with what strange prophetic power he rules over that chaos of spiritual Nature, bodying forth a whole world of Darkness, broken by pallid gleams or wild sparkles of light, and peopled with huge, shadowy, bewildered shapes, full of grandeur and meaning. No Poet known to us, not Milton himself, shows such a vastness of Imagination; such a rapt, deep, Old-Hebrew spirit as Richter in these scenes. He mentions, in his Biographical Notes, the impression which these lines of the *Tempest* had on him, as recited by one of his companions:

'We are such stuff
As Dreams are made of, and our little Life
Is rounded with a sleep.'

* *Hesperus:* Preface.

'The passage of Shakspeare,' says he, '*rounded with a sleep* (*mit Schlaf umgeben*), in Plattner's mouth, created whole books in me.'—The following Dream is perhaps his grandest, as undoubtedly it is among his most celebrated. We shall give it entire, long as it is, and therewith finish our quotations. What value he himself put on it, may be gathered from the following Note: 'If ever my heart,' says he, 'were to grow so wretched and so dead that all feelings in it which announce the being of a God were extinct there, I would terrify myself with this sketch of mine; it would heal me, and give me my feelings back.' We translate from *Siebenkäs*, where it forms the first Chapter, or *Blumenstück* (Flower-Piece).

'The purpose of this Fiction is the excuse of its boldness. Men deny the Divine Existence with as little feeling as the most assert it. Even in our true systems we go on collecting mere words, play-marks and medals, as misers do coins; and not till late do we transform the words into feelings, the coins into enjoyments. A man may, for twenty years, believe the Immortality of the Soul;—in the one-and-twentieth, in some great moment, he for the first time discovers with amazement the rich meaning of this belief, the warmth of this Naphtha-well.

'Of such sort, too, was my terror, at the poisonous stifling vapour which floats out round the heart of him who for the first time enters the school of Atheism. I could with less pain deny Immortality than Deity: there I should lose but a world covered with mists, here I should lose the present world, namely the Sun thereof: the whole spiritual Universe is dashed asunder by the hand of Atheism into numberless quick-silver points, of *Me's*, which glitter, run, waver, fly together or asunder, without unity or continuance. No one in Creation is so alone, as the denier of God; he mourns, with an orphaned heart that has lost its great Father, by the Corpse of Nature, which no World-spirit moves and holds together, and which grows in its grave; and he mourns by that Corpse till he himself crumble off from it. The whole world lies before him, like the Egyptian Sphinx of stone, half-buried in the sand; and the All is the cold iron mask of a formless Eternity. * * *

'I merely remark farther, that with the belief of Atheism, the belief of Immortality is quite compatible; for the same Necessity, which in this Life threw my light dewdrop of a *Me* into a flower-bell and—under a Sun, can repeat that process in a second life; nay, more easily embody me the second time than the first.

'If we hear, in childhood, that the Dead, about midnight, when our *sleep reaches near the soul*, and darkens even our dreams, awake out of

theirs, and in the church mimic the worship of the living, we shudder at Death by reason of the dead, and in the night-solitude turn away our eyes from the long silent windows of the church, and fear to search in their gleaming, whether it proceed from the moon.

'Childhood, and rather its terrors than its raptures, take wings and radiance again in dreams, and sport like fire-flies in the little night of the soul. Crush not these flickering sparks!—Leave us even our dark painful dreams as higher and half-shadows of reality!—And wherewith will you replace to us *those* dreams, which bear us away from under the tumult of the waterfall into the still heights of childhood, where the stream of life yet ran silent in its little plain, and flowed towards its abysses, a mirror of the Heaven?—

'I was lying once, on a summer evening, in the sunshine; and I fell asleep. Methought I awoke in the Churchyard. The down-rolling wheels of the steeple-clock, which was striking eleven, had awakened me. In the emptied night-heaven I looked for the Sun; for I thought an eclipse was veiling him with the Moon. All the Graves were open, and the iron doors of the charnel-house were swinging to and fro by invisible hands. On the walls flitted shadows, which proceeded from no one, and other shadows stretched upwards in the pale air. In the open coffins none now lay sleeping but the children. Over the whole heaven hung, in large folds, a gray sultry mist; which a giant shadow, like vapour, was drawing down, nearer, closer, and hotter. Above me I heard the distant fall of avalanches; under me the first step of a boundless earthquake. The Church wavered up and down with two interminable Dissonances, which struggled with each other in it; endeavouring in vain to mingle in unison. At times, a gray glimmer hovered along the windows, and under it the lead and iron fell down molten. The net of the mist, and the tottering Earth brought me into that hideous Temple; at the door of which, in two poison-bushes, two glittering Basilisks lay brooding. I passed through unknown Shadows, on whom ancient centuries were impressed.—All the Shadows were standing round the empty Altar; and in all, not the heart, but the breast quivered and pulsed. One dead man only, who had just been buried there, still lay on his coffin without quivering breast; and on his smiling countenance stood a happy dream. But at the entrance of one Living, he awoke, and smiled no longer; he lifted his heavy eyelids, but within was no eye; and in his beating breast there lay, instead of a heart, a wound. He held up his hands and folded them to pray; but the arms lengthened out and dissolved; and the hands, still folded together, fell away. Above, on the Church-dome, stood the dial-plate of *Eternity*, whereon no number appeared, and which was its own index: but a black finger pointed thereon, and the Dead sought to see the time by it.

'Now sank from aloft a noble, high Form, with a look of unefface-able sorrow, down to the Altar, and all the Dead cried out, "Christ! is there no God?" He answered, "There is none!" The whole

Shadow of each then shuddered, not the breast alone; and one after the other, all, in this shuddering, shook into pieces.

'Christ continued: "I went through the Worlds, I mounted into the Suns, and flew with the Galaxies through the wastes of Heaven; but there is no God! I descended as far as Being casts its shadow, and looked down into the Abyss and cried, Father, where art thou? But I heard only of the everlasting storm which no one guides, and the gleaming Rainbow of Creation hung without a Sun that made it, over the Abyss, and trickled down. And when I looked up to the immeasurable world for the Divine *Eye*, it glared on me with an empty, black, bottomless *Eye-socket;* and Eternity lay upon Chaos, eating it and ruminating it. Cry on, ye Dissonances; cry away the Shadows, for He is not!"

'The pale-grown Shadows flitted away, as white vapour which frost has formed with the warm breath disappears; and all was void. O, then came, fearful for the heart, the dead Children who had been awakened in the Churchyard, into the Temple, and cast themselves before the high Form on the Altar, and said, "Jesus, have we no Father?" And he answered, with streaming tears, "We are all orphans, I and you: we are without Father!"

'Then shrieked the Dissonances still louder,—the quivering walls of the Temple parted asunder; and the Temple and the Children sank down, and the whole Earth and the Sun sank after it, and the whole Universe sank with its immensity before us; and above, on the summit of immeasurable Nature, stood Christ, and gazed down into the Universe chequered with its thousand Suns, as into the Mine bored out of the Eternal Night, in which the Suns run like mine-lamps, and the Galaxies like silver veins.

'And as he saw the grinding press of Worlds, the torch-dance of celestial wildfires, and the coral-banks of beating hearts; and as he saw how world after world shook off its glimmering souls upon the Sea of Death, as a water-bubble scatters swimming lights on the waves, then majestic as the Highest of the Finite, he raised his eyes towards the Nothingness, and towards the void Immensity, and said: "Dead, dumb Nothingness! Cold, everlasting Necessity! Frantic Chance! Know ye what this is that lies beneath you! When will ye crush the Universe in pieces, and me? Chance, knowest thou what thou doest, when with thy hurricanes thou walkest through that snow-powder of Stars, and extinguishest Sun after Sun, and that sparkling dew of heavenly lights goes out as thou passest over it? How is each so solitary in this wide grave of the All! I am alone with myself! O Father, O Father! where is thy infinite bosom, that I might rest on it? Ah, if each soul is its own father and creator, why cannot it be its own destroyer too?

'"Is this beside me yet a Man? Unhappy one! Your little life is the sigh of Nature, or only its echo; a convex-mirror throws its rays into that dust-cloud of dead men's ashes down on the Earth; and thus

you, cloud-formed wavering phantasms, arise.—Look down into the Abyss, over which clouds of ashes are moving; mists full of Worlds reek up from the Sea of Death; the *Future* is a mounting mist, and the *Present* is a falling one.—Knowest thou thy Earth again?"

'Here Christ looked down, and his eyes filled with tears, and he said: "Ah, I was once there; I was still happy then; I had still my Infinite Father, and looked up cheerfully from the mountains into the immeasurable Heaven, and pressed my mangled breast on his healing form, and said, even in the bitterness of death: Father, take thy son from this bleeding hull, and lift him to thy heart!—Ah, ye too happy inhabitants of Earth, ye still believe in *Him*. Perhaps even now your Sun is going down, and ye kneel amid blossoms, and brightness, and tears, and lift trustful hands, and cry with joy-streaming eyes to the opened Heaven: 'Me too thou knowest, Omnipotent, and all my wounds; and at death thou receivest me, and closest them all!' Unhappy creatures, at death they will not be closed! Ah, when the sorrow-laden lays himself, with galled back, into the Earth, to sleep till a fairer Morning full of Truth, full of Virtue and Joy,—he awakens in a stormy Chaos, in the everlasting Midnight,—and there comes no Morning, and no soft healing hand, and no Infinite Father!—Mortal, beside me! if thou still livest, pray to *Him;* else hast thou lost him forever!"

'And as I fell down, and looked into the sparkling Universe, I saw the upborne Rings of the Giant-Serpent, the Serpent of Eternity, which had coiled itself round the All of Worlds,—and the Rings sank down, and encircled the All doubly; and then it wound itself, innumerable ways, round Nature, and swept the Worlds from their places, and crashing, squeezed the Temple of Immensity together, into the Church of a Burying-ground,—and all grew strait, dark, fearful,—and an immeasurably-extended Hammer was to strike the last hour of Time, and shiver the Universe asunder, . . . WHEN I AWOKE.

'My soul wept for joy that I could still pray to God; and the joy, and the weeping, and the faith on him were my prayer. And as I arose, the Sun was glowing deep behind the full purpled corn-ears, and casting meekly the gleam of its twilight-red on the little Moon, which was rising in the East without an Aurora; and between the sky and the earth, a gay transient air-people was stretching out its short wings, and living, as I did, before the Infinite Father; and from all Nature around me flowed peaceful tones as from distant evening-bells.'

Without commenting on this singular piece, we must here for the present close our lucubrations on Jean Paul. To delineate, with any correctness, the specific features of such a genius, and of its operations and results in the great variety of provinces where it dwelt and worked, were a long task; for which, perhaps, some groundwork may have been laid here, and

which, as occasion serves, it will be pleasant for us to resume.

Probably enough our readers, in considering these strange matters, will too often bethink them of that 'Episode concerning Paul's Costume;' and conclude that, as in living, so in writing, he was a Mannerist, and man of continual Affectations. We will not quarrel with them on this point; we must not venture among the intricacies it would lead us into. At the same time, we hope many will agree with us in honouring Richter, such as he was; and 'in spite of his hundred real, and his ten thousand seeming faults,' discern under this wondrous guise the spirit of a true Poet and Philosopher. A Poet, and among the highest of his time, we must reckon him, though he wrote no verses; a Philosopher, though he promulgated no systems: for, on the whole, that 'Divine Idea of the World' stood in clear ethereal light before his mind; he recognised the Invisible, even under the mean forms of these days, and with a high, strong not uninspired heart, strove to represent it in the Visible, and publish tidings of it to his fellow-men. This one virtue, the foundation of all the other virtues, and which a long study more and more clearly reveals to us in Jean Paul, will cover far greater sins than his were. It raises him into quite another sphere than that of the thousand elegant Sweet-singers, and cause-and-effect *Philosophes*, in his own country or in this; the million Novel-manufacturers, Sketchers, practical Discoursers and so forth, not once reckoned in. Such a man we can safely recommend to universal study; and for those who, in the actual state of matters, may the most blame him, repeat the old maxim: 'What is extraordinary, try to look at with your own eyes.'

SCHILLER.*

[1831.]

To the student of German Literature, or of Literature in general, these Volumes, purporting to lay open the private intercourse of two men eminent beyond all others of their time in that department, will doubtless be a welcome appearance. Neither Schiller nor Goethe has ever, that we have hitherto seen, written worthlessly on any subject; and the writings here offered us are confidential Letters, relating moreover to a highly important period in the spiritual history, not only of the parties themselves, but of their country likewise; full of topics, high and low, on which far meaner talents than theirs might prove interesting. We have heard and known so much of both these venerated persons; of their friendship, and true coöperation in so many noble endeavours, the fruit of which has long been plain to every one: and now are we to look into the secret constitution and conditions of all this; to trace the public result, which is Ideal, down to its roots in the Common; how Poets may live and work poetically among the Prose things of this world, and *Fausts* and *Tells* be written on rag-paper and with goose-quills, like mere Minerva Novels, and songs by a Person of Quality! Virtuosos have glass bee-hives, which they curiously peep into; but here truly were a far stranger sort of honey-making. Nay, apart from virtuososhiip, or any technical object, what a hold have such things on our universal curiosity as men! If the sympathy we feel with one another is infinite, or nearly so,—in proof of which, do but consider the boundless ocean of Gossip

* Fraser's Magazine, No. 14.—*Briefwechsel zwischen Schiller und Goethe, in den Jahren* 1794 *bis* 1805 (Correspondence between Schiller and Goethe, in the years 1794-1805). 1st-3d Volumes (1794-1797). Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1828-29.

(imperfect, undistilled Biography) which is emitted and imbibed by the human species daily;—if every secret-history, every closed-doors conversation, how trivial soever, has an interest for us; then might the conversation of a Schiller with a Goethe, so rarely do Schillers meet with Goethes among us, tempt Honesty itself into eavesdropping.

Unhappily the conversation flits away forever with the hour that witnessed it; and the Letter and Answer, frank, lively, genial as they may be, are only a poor emblem and epitome of it. The living dramatic movement is gone; nothing but the cold historical net-product remains for us. It is true, in every confidential Letter, the writer will, in some measure, more or less directly depict himself: but nowhere is Painting, by pen or pencil, so inadequate as in delineating Spiritual Nature. The Pyramid can be measured in geometric feet, and the draughtsman represents it, with all its environment, on canvas, accurately to the eye; nay, Mont-Blanc is embossed in coloured stucco; and we have his very type, and miniature fac-simile, in our museums. But for great Men, let him who would know such, pray that he may see them daily face to face: for in the dim distance, and by the eye of the imagination, our vision, do what we may, will be too imperfect. How pale, thin, ineffectual do the great figures we would fain summon from History rise before us! Scarcely as palpable men does our utmost effort body them forth; oftenest only like Ossian's ghosts, in hazy twilight, with 'stars dim twinkling through their forms.' Our Socrates, our Luther, after all that we have talked and argued of them, are to most of us quite invisible; the Sage of Athens, the Monk of Eisleben; not Persons, but Titles. Yet such men, far more than any Alps or Coliseums, are the true world-wonders, which it concerns us to behold clearly, and imprint forever on our remembrance. Great men are the Fire-pillars in this dark pilgrimage of mankind; they stand as heavenly Signs; everliving witnesses of what has been, prophetic tokens of what may still be, the revealed, embodied Possibilities of human nature; which greatness he who has never seen, or rationally conceived of, and with his whole heart passionately loved and reverenced, is himself forever doomed to be little. How many weighty reasons, how many innocent allurements attract our curiosity to such men! We would know them, see them visibly, even as we know and see our like: no hint, no notice that concerns them is superfluous or too small for us. Were Gulliver's Conjuror but here, to recall and sensibly bring back

the brave Past, that we might look into it, and scrutinise it at will! But alas, in Nature there is no such conjuring: the great spirits that have gone before us can survive only as disembodied Voices; their form and distinctive aspect, outward and even in many respects inward, all whereby they were known as living, breathing men, has passed into another sphere; from which only History, in scanty memorials, can evoke some faint resemblance of it. The more precious, in spite of all imperfections, is such History, are such memorials, that still in some degree preserve what had otherwise been lost without recovery.

For the rest, as to the maxim, often enough inculcated on us, that close inspection will abate our admiration, that only the obscure can be sublime, let us put small faith in it. Here, as in other provinces, it is not knowledge, but a little knowledge, that puffeth up, and for wonder at the thing known substitutes mere wonder at the knower thereof: to a sciolist the starry heavens revolving in dead mechanism may be less than a Jacob's vision; but to the Newton they are more; for the same God still dwells enthroned there, and holy Influences, like Angels, still ascend and descend; and this clearer vision of a little but renders the remaining mystery the deeper and more divine. So likewise is it with true spiritual greatness. On the whole, that theory of 'no man being a hero to his valet,' carries us but a little way into the real nature of the case. With a superficial meaning which is plain enough, it essentially holds good only of such heroes as are false, or else of such valets as are too genuine, as are shoulder-knotted and brass-lacquered in soul as well as in body: of other sorts it does not hold. Milton was still a hero to the good Elwood. But we dwell not on that mean doctrine, which, true or false, may be left to itself the more safely, as in practice it is of little or no immediate import. For were it never so true, yet unless we preferred huge bugbears to small realities, our practical course were still the same: to inquire, to investigate by all methods, till we saw clearly.

What worth in this biographical point of view the *Correspondence of Schiller and Goethe* may have, we shall not attempt determining here; the rather as only a portion of the Work, and to judge by the space of time included in it, only a small portion, is yet before us. Nay perhaps its full worth will not become apparent till a future age, when the persons and concerns it treats of shall have assumed their proper relative magnitude, and stand disencumbered, and forever separated from contemporary trivialities, which, for the present,

with their hollow transient bulk, so mar our estimate. Two centuries ago, Leicester and Essex might be the wonders of England; their Kenilworth Festivities and Cadiz Expeditions seemed the great occurrences of that day;—but what would we now give, were these all forgotten, and some 'Correspondence between Shakspeare and Ben Jonson' suddenly brought to light!

One valuable quality these Letters of Schiller and Goethe everywhere exhibit, that of truth: whatever we do learn from them, whether in the shape of fact or of opinion, may be relied on as genuine. There is a tone of entire sincerity in that style: a constant natural courtesy nowhere obstructs the right freedom of word or thought; indeed, no ends but honourable ones, and generally of a mutual interest, are before either party; thus neither needs to veil, still less to mask himself from the other; the two self-portraits, so far as they are filled up, may be looked upon as real likenesses. Perhaps, to most readers, some larger intermixture of what we should call domestic interest, of ordinary human concerns, and the hopes, fears and other feelings these excite, would have improved the Work; which as it is, not indeed without pleasant exceptions, turns mostly on compositions, and publications, and philosophies, and other such high matters. This, we believe, is a rare fault in modern Correspondences; where generally the opposite fault is complained of, and except mere temporalities, good and evil hap of the corresponding parties, their state of purse, heart and nervous system, and the moods and humours these give rise to, —little stands recorded for us. It may be, too, that native readers will feel such a want less than foreigners do, whose curiosity in this instance is equally minute, and to whom so many details, familiar enough in the country itself, must be unknown. At all events, it is to be remembered that Schiller and Goethe are, in strict speech, Literary Men; for whom their social life is only as the dwelling-place and outward tabernacle of their spiritual life; which latter is the one thing needful; the other, except in subserviency to this, meriting no attention, or the least possible. Besides, as cultivated men, perhaps even by natural temper, they are not in the habit of yielding to violent emotions of any kind, still less of unfolding and depicting such, by letter, even to closest intimates; a turn of mind, which, if it diminished the warmth of their epistolary intercourse, must have increased their private happiness, and so by their friends can hardly be regretted. He who wears his heart

on his sleeve, will often have to lament aloud that daws peck at it: he who does not, will spare himself such lamenting. Of Rousseau Confessions, whatever value we assign that sort of ware, there is no vestige in this Correspondence.

Meanwhile, many cheerful, honest little domestic touches are given here and there; which we can accept gladly, with no worse censure than wishing that there had been more. But this Correspondence has another and more proper aspect, under which, if rightly considered, it possesses a far higher interest than most domestic delineations could have imparted. It shows us two high, creative, truly poetic minds, unweariedly cultivating themselves, unweariedly advancing from one measure of strength and clearness to another; whereby to such as travel, we say not on the same road, for this few can do, but in the same direction, as all should do, the richest psychological and practical lesson is laid out; from which men of every intellectual degree may learn something, and he that is of the highest degree will probably learn the most. What value lies in this lesson, moreover, may be expected to increase in an increasing ratio as the Correspondence proceeds, and a larger space, with broader differences of advancement, comes into view; especially as respects Schiller, the younger and more susceptive of the two; for whom, in particular, these eleven years may be said to comprise the most important era of his culture; indeed, the whole history of his progress therein, from the time when he first found the right path, and properly became progressive.

But to enter farther on the merits and special qualities of these Letters, which, on all hands, will be regarded as a publication of real value, both intrinsic and extrinsic, is not our task now. Of the frank, kind, mutually-respectful relation that manifests itself between the two Correspondents; of their several epistolary styles, and the worth of each, and whatever else characterises this Work as a series of biographical documents, or of philosophical views, we may at some future period have occasion to speak: certain detached speculations and indications will of themselves come before us in the course of our present undertaking. Meanwhile, to British readers, the chief object is not the Letters, but the Writers of them. Of Goethe the public already know something: of Schiller less is known, and our wish is to bring him into closer approximation with our readers.

Indeed, had we considered only his importance in German,

or we may now say, in European Literature, Schiller might well have demanded an earlier notice in our Journal. As a man of true poetical and philosophical genius, who proved this high endowment both in his conduct, and by a long series of Writings which manifest it to all; nay, even as a man so eminently admired by his nation, while he lived, and whose fame, there and abroad, during the twenty-five years since his decease, has been constantly expanding and confirming itself, he appears with such claims as can belong only to a small number of men. If we have seemed negligent of Schiller, want of affection was nowise the cause. Our admiration for him is of old standing, and has not abated, as it ripened into calm loving estimation. But to English expositors of Foreign Literature, at this epoch, there will be many more pressing duties than that of expounding Schiller. To a considerable extent, Schiller may be said to expound himself. His greatness is of a simple kind; his manner of displaying it is, for most part, apprehensible to every one. Besides, of all German Writers, ranking in any such class as his, Klopstock scarcely excepted, he has the least nationality: his character indeed is German, if German mean true, earnest, nobly-humane; but his mode of thought, and mode of utterance, all but the mere vocables of it, are European.

Accordingly it is to be observed, no German Writer has had such acceptance with foreigners; has been so instantaneously admitted into favour, at least any favour which proved permanent. Among the French, for example, Schiller is almost naturalised; translated, commented upon, by men of whom Constant is one; even brought upon the stage, and by a large class of critics vehemently extolled there. Indeed, to the Romanticist class, in all countries, Schiller is naturally the pattern man and great master; as it were, a sort of ambassador and mediator, were mediation possible, between the Old School and the New; pointing to his own Works, as to a glittering bridge, that will lead pleasantly from the Versailles gardening and artificial hydraulics of the one, into the true Ginnistan and Wonderland of the other. With ourselves too, who are troubled with no controversies on Romanticism and Classicism,—the Bowles controversy on Pope having long since evaporated without result, and all critical guild-brethren now working diligently, with one accord, in the calmer sphere of Vapidism or even Nullism,—Schiller is no less universally esteemed by persons of any feeling for poetry. To readers of German, and

these are increasing everywhere a hundred-fold, he is one of the earliest studies; and the dullest cannot study him without some perception of his beauties. For the Un-German, again, we have Translations in abundance and superabundance; through which, under whatever distortion, however shorn of his beams, some image of this poetical sun must force itself; and in susceptive hearts awaken love, and a desire for more immediate insight. So that now, we suppose, anywhere in England, a man who denied that Schiller was a Poet would himself be, from every side, declared a Prosaist, and thereby summarily enough put to silence.

All which being so, the weightiest part of our duty, that of preliminary pleading for Schiller, of asserting rank and excellence for him while a stranger, and to judges suspicious of counterfeits, is taken off our hands. The knowledge of his works is silently and rapidly proceeding; in the only way by which true knowledge can be attained, by loving study of them in many an inquiring, candid mind. Moreover, as remarked above, Schiller's works, generally speaking, require little commentary: for a man of such excellence, for a true Poet, we should say that his worth lies singularly open; nay, in great part of his writings, beyond such open, universally recognisable worth, there is no other to be sought.

Yet doubtless if he is a Poet, a genuine interpreter of the Invisible, Criticism will have a greater duty to discharge for him. Every Poet, be his outward lot what it may, finds himself born in the midst of Prose; he has to struggle from the littleness and obstruction of an Actual world, into the freedom and infinitude of an Ideal; and the history of such struggle, which is the history of his life, cannot be other than instructive. His is a high, laborious, unrequited, or only self-requited endeavour; which, however, by the law of his being, he is compelled to undertake, and must prevail in, or be permanently wretched; nay, the more wretched, the nobler his gifts are. For it is the deep, inborn claim of his whole spiritual nature, and will not and must not go unanswered. His youthful unrest, that 'unrest of genius,' often so wayward in its character, is the dim anticipation of this; the mysterious, all-powerful mandate, as from Heaven, to prepare himself, to purify himself, for the vocation wherewith he is called. And yet how few can fulfil this mandate, how few earnestly give heed to it! Of the thousand jingling dilettanti, whose jingle dies with the hour which it harmlessly or hurtfully amused, we say nothing here:

to these, as to the mass of men, such calls for spiritual perfection speak only in whispers, drowned without difficulty in the din and dissipation of the world. But even for the Byron, for the Burns, whose ear is quick for celestial messages, in whom 'speaks the prophesying spirits,' in awful prophetic voice, how hard is it to 'take no counsel with flesh and blood,' and instead of living and writing for the Day that passes over them, live and write for the Eternity that rests and abides over them; instead of living commodiously in the Half, the Reputable, the Plausible, 'to live resolutely in the Whole, the Good, the True!'* Such Halfness, such halting between two opinions, such painful, altogether fruitless negotiating between Truth and Falsehood, has been the besetting sin, and chief misery, of mankind in all ages. Nay in our age, it has christened itself Moderation, a prudent taking of the middle course; and passes current among us as a virtue. How virtuous it is, the withered condition of many a once ingenuous nature that has lived by this method; the broken or breaking heart of many a noble nature that could not live by it,—speak aloud, did we but listen.

And now when, from among so many shipwrecks and misventures, one goodly vessel comes to land, we joyfully survey its rich cargo, and hasten to question the crew on the fortunes of their voyage. Among the crowd of uncultivated and misculti-vated writers, the high, pure Schiller stands before us with a like distinction. We ask: How was this man successful? from what peculiar point of view did he attempt penetrating the secret of spiritual Nature? From what region of Prose rise into Poetry? Under what outward accidents; with what inward faculties; by what methods; with what result?

For any thorough or final answer to such questions, it is evident enough, neither our own means, nor the present situation of our readers in regard to this matter, are in any measure adequate. Nevertheless, the imperfect beginning must be made before the perfect result can appear. Some slight far-off glance over the character of the man, as he looked and lived, in Action and in Poetry, will not, perhaps, be unacceptable from us: for such as know little of Schiller, it may be an opening of the way to better knowledge; for such as are already familiar with him, it may be a stating in words of what they themselves have often thought, and welcome, therefore, as the confirming testimony of a second witness.

* *Im Ganzen, Guten, Wahren resolut zu leben.* Goethe.

Of Schiller's personal history there are accounts in various accessible publications; so that, we suppose, no formal Narrative of his Life, which may now be considered generally known, is necessary here. Such as are curious on the subject, and still uninformed, may find some satisfaction in the *Life of Schiller* (London, 1825); in the *Vie de Schiller*, prefixed to the French Translation of his Dramatic Works; in the *Account of Schiller*, prefixed to the English Translation of his Thirty-Years War (Edinburgh, 1828); and, doubtless, in many other Essays, known to us only by title. Nay in the survey we propose to make of his character, practical as well as speculative, the main facts of his outward history will of themselves come to light.

Schiller's Life is emphatically a literary one; that of a man existing only for Contemplation; guided forward by the pursuit of ideal things, and seeking and finding his true welfare therein. A singular simplicity characterises it, a remoteness from whatever is called business; an aversion to the tumults of business, an indifference to its prizes, grows with him from year to year. He holds no office; scarcely for a little while a University Professorship; he covets no promotion; has no stock of money; and shows no discontent with these arrangements. Nay when permanent sickness, continual pain of body, is added to them, he still seems happy: these last fifteen years of his life are, spiritually considered, the clearest and most productive of all. We might say, there is something priest-like in that Life of his: under quite another colour and environment, yet with aims differing in form rather than in essence, it has a priest-like stillness, a priest-like purity; nay, if for the Catholic Faith we substitute the Ideal of Art, and for Convent Rules, Moral or Æsthetic Laws, it has even something of a monastic character. By the three monastic vows he was not bound: yet vows of as high and difficult a kind, both to do and to forbear, he had taken on him; and his happiness and whole business lay in observing them. Thus immured, not in cloisters of stone and mortar, yet in cloisters of the mind, which separate him as impassably from the vulgar, he works and meditates only on what we may call Divine things; his familiar talk, his very recreations, the whole actings and fancyings of his daily existence, tend thither.

As in the life of a Holy Man too, so in that of Schiller, there is but one great epoch: that of taking on him these Literary Vows; of finally extricating himself from the distractions of

the world, and consecrating his whole future days to Wisdom. What lies before this epoch, and what lies after it, have two altogether different characters. The former is worldly, and occupied with worldly vicissitudes; the latter is spiritual, of calm tenour; marked to himself only by his growth in inward clearness, to the world only by the peaceable fruits of this. It is to the first of these periods that we shall here chiefly direct ourselves.

In his parentage, and the circumstances of his earlier years, we may reckon him fortunate. His parents, indeed, are not rich, nor even otherwise independent: yet neither are they meanly poor; and warm affection, a true honest character, ripened in both into religion, not without an openness for knowledge, and even considerable intellectual culture, makes amends for every defect. The Boy, too, is himself of a character in which, to the observant, lies the richest promise. A modest, still nature, apt for all instruction in heart or head; flashes of liveliness, of impetuosity, from time to time breaking through. That little anecdote of the Thunder-storm is so graceful in its littleness, that one cannot but hope it may be authentic.

'Once, it is said, during a tremendous thunder-storm, his father missed him in the young group within doors; none of the sisters could tell what was become of Fritz, and the old man grew at length so anxious that he was forced to go out in quest of him. Fritz was scarcely past the age of infancy, and knew not the dangers of a scene so awful. His father found him at last, in a solitary place of the neighbourhood, perched on the branch of a tree, gazing at the tempestuous face of the sky, and watching the flashes as in succession they spread their lurid gleam over it. To the reprimands of his parent, the whimpering truant pleaded in extenuation, "that the Lightning was so beautiful, and he wished to see where it was coming from!"'

In his village-school he reads the Classics with diligence, without relish; at home, with far deeper feelings, the Bible; and already his young heart is caught with that mystic grandeur of the Hebrew Prophets. His devout nature, moulded by the pious habits of his parents, inclines him to be a clergyman: a clergyman, indeed, he proved; only the Church he ministered in was the Catholic, a far more Catholic than that false Romish one. But already in his ninth year, not without rapturous amazement, and a lasting remembrance, he had seen the 'splendours of the Ludwigsburg Theatre;' and so, unconsciously, cast a glimpse

into that world, where, by accident or natural preference, his own genius was one day to work out its noblest triumphs.

Before the end of his boyhood, however, begins a far harsher era for Schiller; wherein, under quite other nurture, other faculties were to be developed in him. He must enter on a scene of oppression, distortion, isolation; under which, for the present, the fairest years of his existence are painfully crushed down. But this too has its wholesome influences on him; for there is in genius that alchemy which converts all metals into gold; which from suffering educes strength, from error clearer wisdom, from all things good.

'The Duke of Würtemberg had lately founded a free seminary for certain branches of professional education: it was first set up at Solitude, one of his country residences; and had now been transferred to Stuttgard, where, under an improved form, and with the name of *Karlsschule*, we believe it still exists. The Duke proposed to give the sons of his military officers a preferable claim to the benefits of this institution; and having formed a good opinion both of Schiller and his father, he invited the former to profit by this opportunity. The offer occasioned great embarrassment: the young man and his parents were alike determined in favour of the Church, a project with which this new one was inconsistent. Their embarrassment was but increased when the Duke, on learning the nature of their scruples, desired them to think well before they decided. It was out of fear, and with reluctance, that his proposal was accepted. Schiller enrolled himself in 1773; and turned, with a heavy heart, from freedom and cherished hopes, to Greek, and seclusion, and Law.

'His anticipations proved to be but too just: the six years which he spent in this Establishment were the most harassing and comfortless of his life. The Stuttgard system of education seems to have been formed on the principle, not of cherishing and correcting nature, but of rooting it out, and supplying its place by something better. The process of teaching and living was conducted with the stiff formality of military drilling; everything went on by statute and ordinance; there was no scope for the exercise of free-will, no allowance for the varieties of original structure. A scholar might possess what instincts or capacities he pleased; the "regulations of the school" took no account of this; he must fit himself into the common mould, which, like the old Giant's bed, stood there, appointed by superior authority, to be filled alike by the great and the little. The same strict and narrow course of reading and composition was marked out for each beforehand, and it was by stealth if he read or wrote anything beside. Their domestic economy was regulated in the same spirit as their preceptorial: it consisted of the same sedulous exclusion of all that could border on pleasure, or give any exercise to choice. The pupils were kept apart from the

conversation or sight of any person but their teachers; none ever got beyond the precincts of despotism to snatch even a fearful joy; their very amusements proceeded by the word of command.

'How grievous all this must have been it is easy to conceive. To Schiller it was more grievous than to any other. Of an ardent and impetuous yet delicate nature, whilst his discontentment devoured him internally, he was too modest to give it the relief of utterance by deeds or words. Locked up within himself, he suffered deeply, but without complaining. Some of his Letters written during this period have been preserved: they exhibit the ineffectual struggles of a fervid and busy mind veiling its many chagrins under a certain dreary patience, which only shows them more painfully. He pored over his lexicons, and grammars, and insipid tasks, with an artificial composure; but his spirit pined within him like a captive's when he looked forth into the cheerful world, or recollected the affection of parents, the hopes and frolicsome enjoyments of past years.'

Youth is to all the glad season of life; but often only by what it hopes, not by what it attains, or what it escapes. In these sufferings of Schiller's many a one may say, there is nothing unexampled: could not the history of every Eton Scholar, of every poor Midshipman, with his rudely-broken domestic ties, his privations, persecutions and cheerless solitude of heart, equal or outdo them? In respect of these its palpable hardships perhaps it might; and be still very miserable. But the hardship which presses heaviest on Schiller lies deeper than all these; out of which the natural fire of almost any young heart will, sooner or later, rise victorious. His worst oppression is an oppression of the moral sense; a fettering not of the Desires only, but of the pure reasonable Will: for besides all outward sufferings, his mind is driven from its true aim, dimly yet invincibly felt to be the true one; and turned, by sheer violence, into one which it feels to be false. Not in Law, with its profits and dignities; not in Medicine, which he willingly, yet still hopelessly exchanges for Law; not in the routine of any marketable occupation, how gainful and honoured soever, can his soul find content and a home: only in some far purer and higher region of Activity; for which he has yet no name; which he once fancied to be the Church, which at length he discovers to be Poetry. Nor is this any transient boyish wilfulness, but a deep-seated, earnest, ineradicable longing, the dim purpose of his whole inner man. Nevertheless as a transient boyish wilfulness his teachers must regard it, and deal with it; and not till after the fiercest contest, and a clear victory, will

its true nature be recognised. Herein lay the sharpest sting of Schiller's ill-fortune; his whole mind is wrenched asunder; he has no rallying point in his misery; he is suffering and toiling for a wrong object. 'A singular miscalculation of Nature,' he says, long afterwards, 'had combined my poetical tendencies with the place of my birth. Any disposition to Poetry did violence to the laws of the Institution where I was educated, and contradicted the plan of its founder. For eight years my enthusiasm struggled with military discipline; but the passion for Poetry is vehement and fiery as a first love. What discipline was meant to extinguish, it blew into a flame. To escape from arrangements that tortured me, my heart sought refuge in the world of ideas, when as yet I was unacquainted with the world of realities, from which iron bars excluded me.'

Doubtless Schiller's own prudence had already taught him that in order to live poetically, it was first requisite to live; that he should and must, as himself expresses it, 'forsake the balmy climate of Pindus for the Greenland of a barren and dreary science of terms.' But the dull work of this Greenland once accomplished, he might rationally hope that his task was done; that the 'leisure gained by superior diligence' would be his own, for Poetry, or whatever else he pleased. Truly, it was 'intolerable and degrading to be hemmed-in still farther by the caprices of severe and formal pedagogues.' No wonder that Schiller 'brooded gloomily' over his situation. But what was to be done? 'Many plans he formed for deliverance: sometimes he would escape in secret to catch a glimpse of the free and busy world, to him forbidden: sometimes he laid schemes for utterly abandoning a place which he abhorred, and trusting to fortune for the rest.' But he is young, inexperienced, unprovided; without help or counsel: there is nothing to be done but endure.

'Under such corroding and continual vexations,' says his Biographer, 'an ordinary spirit would have sunk at length; would have gradually given up its loftier aspirations, and sought refuge in vicious indulgence, or at best have sullenly harnessed itself into the yoke, and plodded through existence; weary, discontented and broken, ever casting back a hankering look on the dreams of his youth, and ever without power to realise them. But Schiller was no ordinary character, and did not act like one. Beneath a cold and simple exterior, dignified with no artificial attractions, and marred in its native amiableness by the incessant obstruction, the isolation and painful destitutions under which he lived, there was concealed a burning energy of soul, which no

obstruction could extinguish. The hard circumstances of his fortune had prevented the natural development of his mind; his faculties had been cramped and misdirected; but they had gathered strength by opposition and the habit of self-dependence which it encouraged. His thoughts, unguided by a teacher, had sounded into the depths of his own nature and the mysteries of his own fate; his feelings and passions, unshared by any other heart, had been driven back upon his own; where, like the volcanic fire that smoulders and fuses in secret, they accumulated till their force grew irresistible.

'Hitherto Schiller had passed for an unprofitable, a discontented and a disobedient Boy: but the time was now come when the gyves of school-discipline could no longer cripple and distort the giant might of his nature: he stood forth as a Man, and wrenched asunder his fetters with a force that was felt at the extremities of Europe. The publication of the *Robbers* forms an era not only in Schiller's history, but in the literature of the World; and there seems no doubt that, but for so mean a cause as the perverted discipline of the Stuttgard school, we had never seen this tragedy. Schiller commenced it in his nineteenth year; and the circumstances under which it was composed are to be traced in all its parts.

'Translations of the work soon appeared in almost all the languages of Europe,* and were read in almost all of them with a deep interest, compounded of admiration and aversion, according to the relative proportions of sensibility and judgment in the various minds which contemplated the subject. In Germany, the enthusiasm which the *Robbers* excited was extreme. The young author had burst upon the world like a meteor; and surprise, for a time, suspended the power of cool and rational criticism. In the ferment produced by the universal discussion of this single topic, the poet was magnified above his natural dimensions, great as they were: and though the general sentence was loudly in his favour, yet he found detractors as well as praisers, and both equally beyond the limits of moderation.

'But the tragedy of the *Robbers* produced for its Author some consequences of a kind much more sensible than these. We have called it the signal of Schiller's deliverance from school-tyranny and military constraint; but its operation in this respect was not immediate. At first it seemed to involve him more deeply than before. He had finished the original sketch of it in 1778; but for fear of offence, he kept it secret till his medical studies were completed. These, in the mean time, he had pursued with sufficient assiduity to merit the usual honours.

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* Our English translation, one of the washiest, was executed (we have been told) in Edinburgh by a 'Lord of Session,' otherwise not unknown in Literature; who went to work under deepest concealment, lest evil might befall him. The confidential Devil, now an Angel, who mysteriously carried him the proof-sheets, is our informant.

In 1780, he had, in consequence, obtained the post of Surgeon to the regiment *Augé* in the Würtemberg army. This advancement enabled him to complete his project,—to print the *Robbers* at his own expense; not being able to find any bookseller that would undertake it. The nature of the work, and the universal interest it awakened, drew attention to the private circumstances of the Author, whom the *Robbers*, as well as other pieces of his writing that had found their way into the periodical publications of the time, sufficiently showed to be no common man. Many grave persons were offended at the vehement sentiments expressed in the *Robbers;* and the unquestioned ability with which these extravagances were expressed but made the matter worse. To Schiller's superiors, above all, such things were inconceivable; he might perhaps be a very great genius, but was certainly a dangerous servant for His Highness, the Grand Duke of Würtemberg. Officious people mingled themselves in the affair: nay the graziers of the Alps were brought to bear upon it. The Grisons magistrates, it appeared, had seen the book, and were mortally huffed at their people's being there spoken of, according to a Swabian adage, as *common highwaymen.** They complained in the *Hamburg Correspondent;* and a sort of jackal at Ludwigsburg, one Walter, whose name deserves to be thus kept in mind, volunteered to plead their cause before the Grand Duke.

'Informed of all these circumstances, the Grand Duke expressed his disapprobation of Schiller's poetical labours in the most unequivocal terms. Schiller was at length summoned before him; and it then turned out, that His Highness was not only dissatisfied with the moral or political errors of the works, but scandalised moreover at its want of literary merit. In this latter respect he was kind enough to proffer his own services. But Schiller seems to have received the proposal with no sufficient gratitude; and the interview passed without advantage to either party. It terminated in the Duke's commanding Schiller to abide by medical subjects: or at least, to beware of writing any more poetry, without submitting it to *his* inspection.

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'Various new mortifications awaited Schiller. It was in vain that he discharged the humble duties of his station with the most strict fidelity, and even, it is said, with superior skill: he was a suspected

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* The obnoxious passage has been carefully expunged from subsequent editions. It was in the third Scene of the second Act. Spiegelberg, discoursing with Razmann, observes, "An honest man you may form of windle-straws; but to make a rascal you must have grist: besides, there is a national genius in it,—a certain rascal-climate, so to speak." In the first Edition there was added, "*Go to the Grisons, for instance; that is what I call the Thief's Athens.*" The patriot who stood forth, on this occasion, for the honour of the Grisons, to deny this weighty charge, and denounce the crime of making it, was not Dogberry or Verges, but 'one of the noble family of Salis.'

person, and his most innocent actions were misconstrued, his slightest faults were visited with the full measure of official severity. * * *

'His free spirit shrank at the prospect of wasting its strength in strife against the pitiful constraints, the minute and endless persecutions of men who knew him not, yet had his fortune in their hands: the idea of dungeons and jailors haunted and tortured his mind; and the means of escaping them, the renunciation of poetry, the source of all his joy, if likewise of many woes, the radiant guiding-star of his turbid and obscure existence, seemed a sentence of death to all that was dignified, and delightful, and worth retaining in his character. * * *

'With the natural feeling of a young author, he had ventured to go in secret, and witness the first representation of his Tragedy at Mannheim. His incognito did not conceal him; he was put under arrest, during a week, for this offence: and as the punishment did not deter him from again transgressing in a similar manner, he learned that it was in contemplation to try more rigorous measures with him. Dark hints were given to him of some exemplary as well as imminent severity: and Dalberg's aid, the sole hope of averting it by quiet means, was distant and dubious. Schiller saw himself reduced to extremities. Beleaguered with present distresses, and the most horrible forebodings, on every side; roused to the highest pitch of indignation, yet forced to keep silence and wear the face of patience, he could endure this maddening constraint no longer. He resolved to be free, at whatever risk; to abandon advantages which he could not buy at such a price; to quit his step-dame home, and go forth, though friendless and alone, to seek his fortune in the great market of life. Some foreign Duke or Prince was arriving at Stuttgard; and all the people were in movement, witnessing the spectacle of his entrance: Schiller seized this opportunity of retiring from the city, careless whither he went, so he got beyond the reach of turnkeys, and Grand Dukes, and commanding officers. It was in the month of October 1782, his twenty-third year.'*

Such were the circumstances under which Schiller rose to manhood. We see them permanently influence his character; but there is also a strength in himself which on the whole triumphs over them. The kindly and the unkindly alike lead him towards the goal. In childhood, the most unheeded, but by far the most important era of existence,—as it were, the still Creation-days of the whole future man,—he had breathed the only wholesome atmosphere, a soft atmosphere of affection and joy: the invisible seeds which are one day to ripen into clear Devoutness, and all humane Virtue, are happily sown in him. Not till he has gathered force for resistance, does the time of contradiction, of being 'purified by suffering,' arrive. For this

* *Life of Schiller*, Part I.

contradiction too we have to thank those Stuttgard Schoolmasters and their purblind Duke. Had the system they followed been a milder, more reasonable one, we should not indeed have altogether lost our Poet, for the Poetry lay in his inmost soul, and could not remain unuttered; but we might well have found him under a far inferior character: not dependent on himself and truth, but dependent on the world and its gifts; not standing on a native, everlasting basis, but on an accidental, transient one.

In Schiller himself, as manifested in these emergencies, we already trace the chief features which distinguish him through life. A tenderness, a sensitive delicacy, aggravated under that harsh treatment, issues in a certain shyness and reserve: which, as conjoined moreover with habits of internal and not of external activity, might in time have worked itself, had his natural temper been less warm and affectionate, into timorous self-seclusion, dissociality, and even positive misanthropy. Nay generally viewed, there is much in Schiller at this epoch that to a careless observer might have passed for weakness; as indeed, for such observers, weakness and fineness of nature are easily confounded. One element of strength, however, and the root of all strength, he throughout evinces: he wills one thing, and knows what he wills. His mind has a purpose, and still better, a right purpose. He already loves true spiritual Beauty with his whole heart and his whole soul; and for the attainment, for the pursuit of this, is prepared to make all sacrifices. As a dim instinct, under vague forms, this aim first appears; gains force with his force, clearness in the opposition it must conquer; and at length declares itself, with a peremptory emphasis which will admit of no contradiction.

As a mere piece of literary history, these passages of Schiller's life are not without interest: this is a 'persecution for conscience-sake,' such as has often befallen heresy in Religion than heresy in Literature; a blind struggle to extinguish, by physical violence, the inward celestial light of a human soul; and here in regard to Literature, as in regard to Religion it always is, an ineffectual struggle. Doubtless, as religious Inquisitors have often done, these secular Inquisitors meant honestly in persecuting; and since the matter went well in spite of them, their interference with it may be forgiven and forgotten. We have dwelt the longer on these proceedings of theirs, because they bring us to the grand crisis of Schiller's history, and for the first time show us his will decisively asserting itself, decisively

pronouncing the law whereby his whole future life is to be governed. He himself says, he 'went empty away; empty in purse and hope.' Yet the mind that dwelt in him was still there with its gifts; and the task of his existence now lay undivided before him. He is henceforth a Literary Man; and need appear in no other character. 'All my connexions,' he could ere long say, 'are now dissolved. The public is now all to me; my study, my sovereign, my confidant. To the public alone I from this time belong; before this and no other tribunal will I place myself; this alone do I reverence and fear. Something majestic hovers before me, as I determine now to wear no other fetters but the sentence of the world, to appeal to no other throne but the soul of man.'*

In his subsequent life, with all varieties of outward fortune, we find a noble inward unity. That love of Literature, and that resolution to abide by it at all hazards, do not forsake him. He wanders through the world; looks at it under many phases; mingles in the joys of social life; is a husband, father; experiences all the common destinies of man; but the same 'radiant guiding-star' which, often obscured, had led him safe through the perplexities of his youth, now shines on him with unwavering light. In all relations and conditions Schiller is blameless, amiable; he is even little tempted to err. That high purpose after spiritual perfection, which with him was a love of Poetry, and an unwearied active love, is itself, when pure and supreme, the necessary parent of good conduct, as of noble feeling. With all men it should be pure and supreme, for in one or the other shape it is the true end of man's life. Neither in any man is it ever wholly obliterated; with the most, however, it remains a passive sentiment, an idle wish. And even with the small residue of men, in whom it attains some measure of activity, who would be Poets in act or word, how seldom is it the sincere and highest purpose, how seldom unmixed with vulgar ambition, and low, mere earthly aims, which distort or utterly pervert its manifestations! With Schiller, again, it was the one thing needful; the first duty, for which all other duties worked together, under which all other duties quietly prospered, as under their rightful sovereign. Worldly preferment, fame itself, he did not covet: yet of fame he reaps the most plenteous harvest; and of worldly goods what little he wanted is in the end made sure to him. His mild, honest

* Preface to the *Thalia*.

character everywhere gains him friends: that upright, peaceful, simple life is honourable in the eyes of all; and they who know him the best love him the most.

Perhaps among all the circumstances of Schiller's literary life, there was none so important for him as his connexion with Goethe. To use our old figure, we might say, that if Schiller was a Priest, then was Goethe the Bishop from whom he first acquired clear spiritual light, by whose hands he was ordained to the priesthood. Their friendship has been much celebrated, and deserved to be so: it is a pure relation; unhappily too rare in Literature; where if a Swift and Pope can even found an imperious Duumvirate, on little more than mutually-tolerated pride, and part the spoils for some time without quarrelling, it is thought a credit. Seldom do men combine so steadily and warmly for such purposes, which when weighed in the economic balance are but gossamer. It appears also that preliminary difficulties stood in the way; prepossessions of some strength had to be conquered on both sides. For a number of years, the two, by accident or choice, never met, and their first interview scarcely promised any permanent approximation. 'On the whole,' says Schiller, 'this personal meeting has not at all diminished the idea, great as it was, which I had previously formed of Goethe; but I doubt whether we shall ever come into close communication with each other. Much that still interests me has already had its epoch with him. His whole nature is, from its very origin, otherwise constructed than mine; his world is not my world; our modes of conceiving things appear to be essentially different. From such a combination no secure substantial intimacy can result.'

Nevertheless, in spite of far graver prejudices on the part of Goethe,—to say nothing of the poor jealousies which in another man so circumstanced would openly or secretly have been at work,—a secure substantial intimacy did result; manifesting itself by continual good offices, and interrupted only by death. If we regard the relative situation of the parties, and their conduct in this matter, we must recognise in both of them no little social virtue; at all events, a deep, disinterested love of worth. In the case of Goethe, more especially, who, as the elder and everyway greater of the two, has little to expect in comparison with what he gives, this friendly union, had we space to explain its nature and progress, would give new proof that, as poor Jung Stilling also experienced, 'the man's heart, which few know, is as true and noble as his genius, which all know.'

By Goethe, and this even before the date of their friendship, Schiller's outward interests had been essentially promoted: he was introduced, under that sanction, into the service of Weimar, to an academic office, to a pension; his whole way was made smooth for him. In spiritual matters, this help, or rather let us say coöperation, for it came not in the shape of help, but of reciprocal service, was of still more lasting consequence. By the side of his friend, Schiller rises into the highest regions of Art he ever reached; and in all worthy things is sure of sympathy, of one wise judgment amid a crowd of unwise ones, of one helpful hand amid many hostile. Thus outwardly and inwardly assisted and confirmed, he henceforth goes on his way with new steadfastness, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left; and while days are given him, devotes them wholly to his best duty. It is rare that one man can do so much for another, can permanently benefit another; so mournfully, in giving and receiving, as in most charitable affections and finer movements of our nature, are we all held-in by that paltry vanity which, under reputable names, usurps, on both sides, a sovereignty it has no claim to. Nay many times, when our friend would honestly help us, and strives to do it, yet will he never bring himself to understand what we really need, and so to forward us on our own path; but insists more simply on our taking his path, and leaves us as incorrigible because we will not and cannot. Thus men are solitary among each other; no one will help his neighbour; each has even to assume a defensive attitude lest his neighbour hinder him?

Of Schiller's zealous, entire devotedness to Literature we have already spoken as of his crowning virtue, and the great source of his welfare. With what ardour he pursued this object, his whole life, from the earliest stage of it, had given proof: but the clearest proof, clearer even than that youthful self-exile, was reserved for his later years, when a lingering, incurable disease had laid on him its new and ever-galling burden. At no period of Schiller's history does the native nobleness of his character appear so decidedly as now in this season of silent unwitnessed heroism, when the dark enemy dwelt within himself, unconquerable, yet ever, in all other struggles, to be kept at bay. We have medical evidence that during the last fifteen years of his life, not a moment could have been free of pain. Yet he utters no complaint. In this 'Correspondence with Goethe' we see him cheerful, laborious; scarcely speaking of his maladies, and then only historically, in the style of a third party, as it were,

calculating what force and length of days might still remain at his disposal. Nay his highest poetical performances, we may say all that are truly poetical, belong to this era. If we recollect how many poor valetudinarians, Rousseaus, Cowpers and the like, men otherwise of fine endowments, dwindle under the influence of nervous disease into pining wretchedness, some into madness itself; and then that Schiller, under the like influence, wrote some of his deepest speculations, and all his genuine dramas, from *Wallenstein* to *Wilhelm Tell*, we shall the better estimate his merit.

It has been said, that only in Religion, or something equivalent to Religion, can human nature support itself under such trials. But Schiller too had his Religion; was a Worshipper, nay, as we have often said, a Priest; and so in his earthly sufferings wanted not a heavenly stay. Without some such stay his life might well have been intolerable; stript of the Ideal, what remained for him in the Real was but a poor matter. Do we talk of his 'happiness'? Alas, what is the loftiest flight of genius, the finest frenzy that ever for moments united Heaven with Earth, to the perennial never-failing joys of a digestive-apparatus thoroughly eupeptic? Has not the turtle-eating man an eternal sunshine of the breast? Does not his Soul—which, as in some Sclavonic dialects, means his Stomach—sit forever at its ease, enwrapped in warm condiments, amid spicy odours; enjoying the past, the present and the future; and only awakening from its soft trance to the sober certainty of a still higher bliss each meal-time,—three, or even four visions of Heaven in the space of one solar day! While for the sick man of genius, 'whose world is of the mind, ideal, internal; when the mildew of lingering disease has struck that world, and begun to blacken and consume its beauty, what remains but despondency, and bitterness, and desolate sorrow felt and anticipated to the end?'

'Woe to him,' continues this Jeremiah, 'if his will likewise falter, if his resolution fail, and his spirit bend its neck to the yoke of this new enemy! Idleness and a disturbed imagination will gain the mastery of him, and let loose their thousand fiends to harass him, to torment him into madness. Alas, the bondage of Algiers is freedom compared with this of the sick man of genius, whose heart has fainted, and sunk beneath its load. His clay dwelling is changed into a gloomy prison; every nerve has become an avenue of disgust or anguish, and the soul sits within in her melancholy loneliness, a prey to the spectres of despair, or stupefied with excess of suffering; doomed as it were to a

life-in-death, to a consciousness of agonised existence, without the consciousness of power which should accompany it. Happily death, or entire fatuity at length puts an end to such scenes of ignoble misery, which, however, ignoble as they are, we ought to view with pity rather than contempt.*

Yet on the whole, we say, it is a shame for the man of genius to complain. Has he not a 'light from Heaven' within him, to which the splendour of all earthly thrones and principalities is but darkness? And the head that wears such a crown grudges to lie uneasy? If that same 'light from Heaven,' shining through the falsest media, supported Syrian Simon through all weather on his sixty-feet Pillar, or the still more wonderful Eremite who walled himself, for life, up to the chin, in stone and mortar; how much more should it do, when shining direct, and pure from all intermixture? Let the modern Priest of Wisdom either suffer his small persecutions and inflictions, though sickness be of the number, in patience, or admit that ancient fanatics and bedlamites were truer worshippers than he.

A foolish controversy on this subject of Happiness now and then occupies some intellectual dinner-party; speculative gentlemen we have seen more than once almost forget their wine in arguing whether Happiness was the chief end of man. The most cry out, with Pope: 'Happiness, our being's end and aim;' and ask whether it is even conceivable that we should follow any other. How comes it, then, cry the Opposition, that the gross are happier than the refined; that even though we know them to be happier, we would not change places with them? Is it not written, Increase of knowledge is increase of sorrow? And yet also written, in characters still more ineffaceable, Pursue knowledge, attain clear vision, as the beginning of all good? Were your doctrine right, for what should we struggle with our whole might, for what pray to Heaven, if not that the 'malady of thought' might be utterly stifled within us, and a power of digestion and secretion, to which that of the tiger were trifling, be imparted instead thereof? Whereupon the others deny that thought is a malady; that increase of knowledge is increase of sorrow; that Aldermen have a sunnier life than Aristotle's, though the Stagyrite himself died exclaiming, *Fœde mundum intravi, anxius vixi, perturbatus, morior;* &c., &c.: and thus the argument circulates, and the bottles stand still.

* *Life of Schiller*, p. 85.

So far as that Happiness-question concerns the symposia of speculative gentlemen,—the rather as it really is a good enduring hacklog whereon to chop logic, for those so minded,—we with great willingness leave it resting on its own bottom. But there are earnest natures for whom Truth is no plaything, but the staff of life; men whom the 'solid reality of things' will not carry forward; who, when the 'inward voice' is silent in them, are powerless, nor will the loud huzzaing of millions supply the want of it. To these men, seeking anxiously for guidance; feeling that did they once clearly see the right, they would follow it cheerfully to weal or to woe, comparatively careless which; to these men the question, what is the proper aim of man, has a deep and awful interest.

For the sake of such, it may be remarked that the origin of this argument, like that of every other argument under the sun, lies in the confusion of language. If Happiness mean Welfare, there is no doubt but all men should and must pursue their Welfare, that is to say, pursue what is worthy of their pursuit. But if, on the other hand, Happiness mean, as for most men it does, 'agreeable sensations,' Enjoyment refined or not, then must we observe that there *is* a doubt; or rather that there is a certainty the other way. Strictly considered, this truth, that man has in him something higher than a Love of Pleasure, take Pleasure in what sense you will, has been the text of all true Teachers and Preachers, since the beginning of the world; and in one or another dialect, we may hope, will continue to be preached and taught till the world end. Neither is our own day without its assertors thereof: what, for example, does the astonished reader make of this little sentence from Schiller's *Æsthetic Letters?* It is on that old question, the 'improvement of the species;' which, however, is handled here in a very new manner:

'The first acquisitions, then, which men gathered in the Kingdom of Spirit were *Anxiety* and *Fear;* both, it is true, products of Reason, not of Sense; but of a Reason that mistook its object, and mistook its mode of application. Fruits of this same tree are all your Happiness-Systems (*Glückseligkeitssysteme*), whether they have for object the passing day, or the whole of life, or what renders them no whit more venerable, the whole of Eternity. A boundless duration of Being and Well-being (*Daseyns und Wohlseyns*) simply for Being and Well-being's sake, is an Ideal belonging to Appetite alone, and which only the struggle of mere Animalism (*Thierheit*), longing to be infinite, gives rise to. Thus without gaining anything for his Manhood, he, by

this first effort of Reason, loses the happy limitation of the Animal; and has now only the unenviable superiority of missing the Present in an effort directed to the Distance, and whereby still, in the whole boundless Distance, nothing but the Present is sought for.'*

The *Æsthetic Letters*, in which this and many far deeper matters come into view, will one day deserve a long chapter to themselves. Meanwhile we cannot but remark, as a curious symptom of this time, that the pursuit of merely sensuous good, of personal Pleasure, in one shape or other, should be the universally admitted formula of man's whole duty. Once, Epicurus had his Zeno; and if the herd of mankind have at all times been the slaves of Desire, drudging anxiously for their mess of pottage, or filling themselves with swine's husks,—earnest natures were not wanting who, at least in theory, asserted for their kind a higher vocation than this; declaring, as they could, that man's soul was no dead Balance for 'motives' to sway hither and thither, but a living, divine Soul indefeasibly free, whose birthright it was to be the servant of Virtue, Goodness, God, and in such service to be blessed without fee or reward. Nowadays, however, matters are, on all hands, managed far more prudently. The choice of Hercules could not occasion much difficulty, in these times, to any young man of talent. On the one hand,—by a path which is steep, indeed, yet smoothed by much travelling, and kept in constant repair by many a moral Macadam,—smokes (in patent calefactors) a Dinner of innumerable courses; on the other, by a downward path, through avenues of very mixed character, frowns in the distance a grim Gallows, probably with 'improved drop.' Thus is Utility the only God of these days; and our honest Benthamites are but a small Provincial Synod of that boundless Communion. Without gift of prophecy we may predict, that the straggling bush-fire which is kept up here and there against that body of well-intentioned men, must one day become a universal battle; and the grand question, Mind *versus* Matter, be again under new forms judged of and decided.—But we wander too far from our task; to which, therefore, nothing doubtful of a prosperous issue in due time to that Utilitarian struggle, we hasten to return.

In forming for ourselves some picture of Schiller as a man, of what may be called his moral character, perhaps the very perfection of his manner of existence tends to diminish our

* *Briefe über die æsthetische Erziehung des Menschen*, b. 24.

estimate of its merits. What he aimed at he has attained in a singular degree. His life, at least from the period of manhood, is still, unruffled; of clear, even course. The completeness of the victory hides from us the magnitude of the struggle. On the whole, however, we may admit, that his character was not so much a great character as a holy one. We have often named him a Priest; and this title, with the quiet loftiness, the pure, secluded, only internal, yet still heavenly worth that should belong to it, perhaps best describes him. One high enthusiasm takes possession of his whole nature. Herein lies his strength, as well as the task he has to do; for this he lived, and we may say also he died for it. In his life we see not that the social affections played any deep part. As a son, husband, father, friend, he is ever kindly, honest, amiable; but rarely, if at all, do outward things stimulate him into what can be called passion. Of the wild loves and lamentations, and all the fierce ardour that distinguish, for instance, his Scottish contemporary Burns, there is scarcely any trace here. In fact, it was towards the Ideal, not towards the Actual, that Schiller's faith and hope was directed. His highest happiness lay not in outward honour, pleasure, social recreation, perhaps not even in friendly affection, such as the world could show it; but in the realm of Poetry, a city of the mind, where, for him, all that was true and noble had foundation. His habits, accordingly, though far from dissocial, were solitary; his chief business and chief pleasure lay in silent meditation.

'His intolerance of interruptions,' we are told, at an early period of his life, 'first put him on the plan of studying by night; an alluring, but pernicious practice, which began at Dresden, and was never afterwards given up. His recreations breathed a similar spirit: he loved to be much alone, and strongly moved. The banks of the Elbe were the favourite resort of his mornings: here, wandering in solitude, amid groves and lawns, and green and beautiful places, he abandoned his mind to delicious musings; or meditated on the cares and studies which had lately been employing, and were again soon to employ him. At times he might be seen floating on the river, in a gondola, feasting himself with the loveliness of earth and sky. He delighted most to be there when tempests were abroad; his unquiet spirit found a solace in the expression of its own unrest on the face of Nature; danger lent a charm to his situation; he felt in harmony with the scene, when the rack was sweeping stormfully across the heavens, and the forests were sounding in the breeze, and the river was rolling its chafed waters into wild eddying heaps.'

'During summer,' it is mentioned at a subsequent date, 'his place

of study was in a garden, which he at length purchased, in the suburbs of Jena, not far from the Weselhofts' house, where, at that time, was the office of the *Allgemeine Litteraturzeitung*. Reckoning from the market-place of Jena, it lies on the south-west border of the town, between the Engelgatter and the Neuthor, in a hollow defile, through which a part of the Leutrabach flows round the city. On the top of the acclivity, from which there is a beautiful prospect into the valley of the Saale, and the fir mountains of the neighbouring forest, Schiller built himself a small house, with a single chamber. It was his favourite abode during hours of composition; a great part of the works he then wrote were written here. In winter he likewise dwelt apart from the tumult of men;—in the Griesbachs' house, on the outside of the city trench. On sitting down to his desk at night, he was wont to keep some strong coffee, or wine-chocolate, but more frequently a flask of old Rhenish or Champagne standing by him, that he might from time to time repair the exhaustion of nature. Often the neighbours used to hear him earnestly declaiming in the silence of the night; and whoever had an opportunity of watching him on such occasions,—a thing very easy to be done, from the heights lying opposite his little garden-house, on the other side of the dale,—might see him now speaking aloud, and walking swiftly to and fro in his chamber, then suddenly throwing himself down into his chair, and writing; and drinking the while, sometimes more than once, from the glass standing near him. In winter he was to be found at his desk till four, or even five o'clock, in the morning; in summer till towards three. He then went to bed, from which he seldom rose till nine or ten.'

And again:

'At Weimar his present way of life was like his former one at Jena: his business was to study and compose; his recreations were in the circle of his family, where he could abandon himself to affections grave or trifling, and in frank cheerful intercourse with a few friends. Of the latter he had lately formed a social club, the meetings of which afforded him a regular and innocent amusement. He still loved solitary walks: in the Park at Weimar he might frequently be seen, wandering among the groves and remote avenues, with a note-book in his hand; now loitering slowly along, now standing still, now moving rapidly on: if any one appeared in sight, he would dart into another alley, that his dream might not be broken. One of his favourite resorts, we are told, was the thickly-overshadowed rocky path which leads to the *Römische Haus*, a pleasure-house of the Duke's, built under the direction of Goethe. There he would often sit in the gloom of the crags overgrown with cypresses and boxwood; shady thickets before him; not far from the murmur of a little brook, which there gushes in a smooth slaty channel, and where some verses of Goethe are cut upon a brown plate of stone and fixed in the rock.'*

* *Life of Schiller.*

Such retirement alike from the tumults and the pleasures of busy men, though it seems to diminish the merit of virtuous conduct in Schiller, is itself, as hinted above, the best proof of his virtue. No man is born without ambitious worldly desires; and for no man, especially for no man like Schiller, can the victory over them be too complete. His duty lay in that mode of life; and he had both discovered his duty, and addressed himself with his whole might to perform it. Nor was it in estrangement from men's interests that this seclusion originated; but rather in deeper concern for these. From many indications, we can perceive that to Schiller the task of the Poet appeared of far weightier import to mankind, in these times, than that of any other man whatever. It seemed to him that he was 'casting his bread upon the waters, and would find it after many days;' that when the noise of all conquerors, and demagogues, and political reformers had quite died away, some tone of heavenly wisdom that had dwelt even in him might still linger among men, and be acknowledged as heavenly and priceless, whether as his or not; whereby, though dead, he would yet speak, and his spirit would live throughout all generations, when the syllables that once formed his name had passed into forgetfulness forever. We are told, 'he was in the highest degree philanthropic and humane: and often said that he had no deeper wish than to know all men happy.' What was still more, he strove, in his public and private capacity, to do his utmost for that end. Honest, merciful, disinterested he is at all times found: and for the great duty laid on him no man was ever more unweariedly ardent. It was his evening song and his morning prayer. He lived for it; and he died for it; 'sacrificing,' in the words of Goethe, 'his Life itself to this Delineating of Life.'

In collision with his fellow-men, for with him as with others this also was a part of his relation to society, we find him no less noble than in friendly union with them. He mingles in none of the controversies of the time; or only like a god in the battles of men. In his conduct towards inferiors, even ill-intentioned and mean inferiors, there is everywhere a true, dignified, patrician spirit. Ever witnessing, and inwardly lamenting, the baseness of vulgar Literature in his day, he makes no clamorous attacks on it; alludes to it only from afar: as in Milton's writings, so in his, few of his contemporaries are named, or hinted at; it was not with men, but with things that he had a warfare. The *Review of Bürger*, so often descanted

on, was doubtless highly afflicting to that down-broken, unhappy poet; but no hostility to Bürger, only love and veneration for the Art he professed, is to be discerned in it. With Bürger, or with any other mortal, he had no quarrel: the favour of the public, which he himself enjoyed in the highest measure, he esteemed at no high value. 'The Artist,' said he in a noble passage, already known to English readers, 'the Artist, it is true, is the son of his time; but pity for him if he is its pupil, or even its favourite! Let some beneficent divinity snatch him, when a suckling, from the breast of his mother, and nurse him with the milk of a better time; that he may ripen to his full stature beneath a distant Grecian sky. And having grown to manhood, let him return, a foreign shape, into his century; not, however, to delight it by his presence, but dreadful like the son of Agamemnon, to purify it!' On the whole, Schiller has no trace of vanity; scarcely of pride, even in its best sense, for the modest self-consciousness, which characterises genius, is with him rather implied than openly expressed. He has no hatred; no anger, save against Falsehood and Baseness, where it may be called a holy anger. Presumptuous triviality stood bared in his keen glance; but his look is the noble scowl that curls the lip of an Apollo, when, pierced with sun-arrows, the serpent expires before him. In a word, we can say of Schiller, what can be said only of few in any country or time: He was a high ministering servant at Truth's altar; and bore him worthily of the office he held. Let this, and that it was even in our age, be forever remembered to his praise.

Schiller's intellectual character has, as indeed is always the case, an accurate conformity with his moral one. Here too he is simple in his excellence; lofty rather than expansive or varied; pure, divinely ardent rather than great. A noble sensibility, the truest sympathy with Nature, in all forms, animates him; yet scarcely any creative gift altogether commensurate with this. If to his mind's eye all forms of Nature have a meaning and beauty, it is only under a few forms, chiefly of the severe or pathetic kind, that he can body forth this meaning, can represent as a Poet what as a Thinker he discerns and loves. We might say, his music is true spheral music; yet only with few tones, in simple modulation; no full choral harmony is to be heard in it. That Schiller, at least in his later years, attained a genuine poetic style, and dwelt, more or less, in the perennial regions of his Art, no one will deny: yet still his poetry shows rather like a partial than a universal gift; the laboured product of certain

faculties rather than the spontaneous product of his whole nature. At the summit of the pyre there is indeed white flame; but the materials are not all inflamed, perhaps not all ignited. Nay often it seems to us, as if poetry were, on the whole, not his essential gift; as if his genius were reflective in a still higher degree than creative; philosophical and oratorical rather than poetic. To the last, there is a stiffness in him, a certain infusibility. His genius is not an Æolian-harp for the common wind to play with, and make wild free melody; but a scientific harmonica, which being artfully touched will yield rich notes, though in limited measure.

It may be, indeed, or rather it is highly probable, that of the gifts which lay in him only a small portion was unfolded: for we are to recollect that nothing came to him without a strenuous effort; and that he was called away at middle age. At all events, here as we find him, we should say, that of all his endowments the most perfect is understanding. Accurate, thorough insight is a quality we miss in none of his productions, whatever else may be wanting. He has an intellectual vision, clear, wide, piercing, methodical; a truly philosophic eye. Yet in regard to this also it is to be remarked, that the same simplicity, the same want of universality again displays itself. He looks aloft rather than around. It is in high, far-seeing philosophic views that he delights; in speculations on Art, on the dignity and destiny of Man, rather than on the common doings and interests of Men. Nevertheless these latter, mean as they seem, are boundless in significance; for every the poorest aspect of Nature, especially of living Nature, is a type and manifestation of the invisible spirit that works in Nature. There is properly no object trivial or insignificant: but every finite thing, could we look well, is as a window, through which solemn vistas are opened into Infinitude itself. But neither as a Poet nor as a Thinker, neither in delineation nor in exposition and discussion, does Schiller more than glance at such objects. For the most part, the Common is to him still the Common; or is idealised, rather as it were by mechanical art than by inspiration: not by deeper poetic or philosophic inspection, disclosing new beauty in its everyday features, but rather by deducting these, by casting them aside, and dwelling on what brighter features may remain in it.

Herein Schiller, as indeed he himself was modestly aware, differs essentially from most great poets; and from none more than from his great contemporary, Goethe. Such intellectual

preëminence as this, valuable though it be, is the easiest and the least valuable; a preëminence which, indeed, captivates the general eye, but may, after all, have little intrinsic grandeur. Less in rising into lofty abstractions lies the difficulty, than in seeing well and lovingly the complexities of what is at hand. He is wise who can instruct us and assist us in the business of daily virtuous living; he who trains us to see old truth under Academic formularies may be wise or not, as it chances; but we love to see Wisdom in unpretending forms, to recognise her royal features under week-day vesture.—There may be more true spiritual force in a Proverb than in a Philosophical System. A King in the midst of his body-guards, with all his trumpets, war-horses and gilt standard-bearers, will look great though he be little; but only some Roman Carus can give audience to satrap-ambassadors, while seated on the ground, with a woollen cap, and supping on boiled pease, like a common soldier.

In all Schiller's earlier writings, nay more or less in the whole of his writings, this aristocratic fastidiousness, this comparatively barren elevation, appears as a leading characteristic. In speculation he is either altogether abstract and systematic, or he dwells on old conventionally-noble themes; never looking abroad, over the many-coloured stream of life, to elucidate and ennoble it; or only looking on it, so to speak, from a college window. The philosophy even of his Histories, for example, founds itself mainly on the perfectibility of man, the effect of constitutions, of religions, and other such high, purely scientific objects. In his Poetry we have a similar manifestation. The interest turns on prescribed, old-established matters; common love-mania, passionate greatness, enthusiasm for liberty and the like. This even in *Don Karlos;* a work of what may be called his transition-period, the turning-point between his earlier and his later period, where still we find Posa, the favourite hero, 'towering aloft, far-shining, clear, and also cold and vacant, as a sea-beacon.' In after years, Schiller himself saw well that the greatest lay not here. With unwearied effort he strove to lower and to widen his sphere; and not without success, as many of his Poems testify; for example, the *Lied der Glocke* (Song of the Bell), everyway a noble composition; and, in a still higher degree, the tragedy of *Wilhelm Tell*, the last, and, so far as spirit and style are concerned, the best of all his dramas.

Closely connected with this imperfection, both as cause

and as consequence, is Schiller's singular want of Humour. Humour is properly the exponent of low things; that which first renders them poetical to the mind. The man of Humour sees common life, even mean life, under the new light of sportfulness and love; whatever has existence has a charm for him. Humour has justly been regarded as the finest perfection of poetic genius. He who wants it, be his other gifts what they may, has only half a mind; an eye for what is above him, not for what is about him or below him. Now, among all writers of any real poetic genius, we cannot recollect one who, in this respect, exhibits such total deficiency as Schiller. In his whole writings there is scarcely any vestige of it, scarcely any attempt that way. His nature was without Humour; and he had too true a feeling to adopt any counterfeit in its stead. Thus no drollery or caricature, still less any barren mockery, which, in the hundred cases are all that we find passing current as Humour, discover themselves in Schiller. His works are full of laboured earnestness; he is the gravest of all writers. Some of his critical discussions, especially in the *Æsthetische Briefe*, where he designates the ultimate height of a man's culture by the title *Spieltrieb* (literally, Sport-impulse), prove that he knew what Humour was, and how essential; as indeed, to his intellect, all forms of excellence, even the most alien to his own, were painted with a wonderful fidelity. Nevertheless, he himself attains not that height which he saw so clearly; to the last the *Spieltrieb* could be little more than a theory with him. With the single exception of *Wallensteins Lager*, where too, the Humour, if it be such, is not deep, his other attempts at mirth, fortunately very few, are of the heaviest. A rigid intensity, a serious enthusiastic ardour, majesty rather than grace, still more than lightness or sportfulness, characterises him. Wit he had, such wit as keen intellectual insight can give; yet even of this no large endowment. Perhaps he was too honest, too sincere, for the exercise of wit; too intent on the deeper relations of things to note their more transient collisions. Besides, he dealt in Affirmation, and not in Negation; in which last, it has been said, the material of wit chiefly lies.

These observations are to point out for us the special department and limits of Schiller's excellence; nowise to call in question its reality. Of his noble sense for Truth both in speculation and in action; of his deep genial insight into Nature; and the living harmony in which he renders back what is highest and grandest in Nature, no reader of his works need

be reminded. In whatever belongs to the pathetic, the heroic, the tragically elevating, Schiller is at home; a master; nay perhaps the greatest of all late poets. To the assiduous student, moreover, much else that lay in Schiller, but was never worked into shape, will become partially visible: deep, inexhaustible mines of thought and feeling; a whole world of gifts, the finest produce of which was but beginning to be realised. To his high-minded unwearied efforts, what was impossible, had length of years been granted him! There is a tone in some of his later pieces, which here and there breathes of the very highest region of Art. Nor are the natural or accidental defects we have noticed in his genius, even as it stands, such as to exclude him from the rank of great Poets. Poets whom the whole world reckons great have, more than once, exhibited the like. Milton, for example, shares most of them with him: like Schiller, he dwells, with full power, only in the high and earnest; in all other provinces exhibiting a certain inaptitude, an elephantine unpliancy: he has too little Humour; his coarse invective has in it contemptuous emphasis enough, yet scarcely any graceful sport. Indeed, on the positive side also, these two worthies are not without a resemblance. Under far other circumstances, with less massiveness and vehement strength of soul, there is in Schiller the same intensity; the same concentration, and towards similar objects, towards whatever is Sublime in Nature and in Art; which sublimities they both, each in his several way, worship with undivided heart. There is not in Schiller's nature the same rich complexity of rhythm as in Milton's, with its depths of linked sweetness; yet in Schiller too there is something of the same pure swelling force, some tone which, like Milton's, is deep, majestic, solemn.

It was as a Dramatic Author that Schiller distinguished himself to the world: yet often we feel as if chance rather than a natural tendency had led him into this province; as if his talent were essentially, in a certain style, lyrical, perhaps even epic, rather than dramatic. He dwelt within himself, and could not without effort, and then only within a certain range, body forth other forms of being. Nay much of what is called his poetry, seems to us, as hinted above, oratorical rather than poetical; his first bias might have led him to be a speaker rather than a singer. Nevertheless, a pure fire dwelt deep in his soul; and only in Poetry, of one or the other sort, could this find utterance. The rest of his nature, at the same time, has a certain prosaic rigour; so that not without strenuous and

complex endeavours, long persisted in, could its poetic quality evolve itself. Quite pure, and as the all-sovereign element, it perhaps never did evolve itself; and among such complex endeavours, a small accident might influence large portions of its course.

Of Schiller's honest undivided zeal in this great problem of self-cultivation, we have often spoken. What progress he had made, and in spite of what difficulties, appears if we contrast his earlier compositions with those of his later years. A few specimens of both sorts we shall here present. By this means, too, such of our readers as are unacquainted with Schiller may gain some clearer notion of his poetic individuality than any description of ours could give. We shall take the *Robbers*, as his first performance, what he himself calls 'a monster produced by the unnatural union of Genius with Thraldom;' the fierce fuliginous fire that burns in that singular piece will still be discernible in separated passages. The following Scene, even in the yeasty vehicle of our common English version, has not wanted its admirers; it is the Second of the Third Act:

Country on the Danube.

THE ROBBERS.

Camped on a Height, under Trees: the Horses are grazing on the Hill farther down.

MOOR. I can no farther [*throws himself on the ground*]. My limbs ache as if ground in pieces. My tongue parched as a potsherd. [*Schweitzer glides away unperceived.*] I would ask you to fetch me a handful of water from the stream; but ye all are wearied to death.

SCHWARZ. And the wine too is all down there, in our jacks.

MOOR. See how lovely the harvest looks! The trees almost breaking under their load. The vine full of hope.

GRIMM. It is a plentiful year.

MOOR. Think'st thou?—And so *one* toil in the world will be repaid. *One?*—Yet overnight there may come a hailstorm, and shatter it all to ruin.

SCHWARZ. Possible enough. It might all be ruined two hours before reaping.

MOOR. Ay, so say I. It will all be ruined. Why should man prosper in what he has from the Ant, when he fails in what makes him like the Gods?—Or is this the true aim of his Destiny?

SCHWARZ. I know it not.

MOOR. Thou hast said well; and done still better, if thou never triedst to know it!—Brother,—I have looked at men, at their insect

anxieties and giant projects—their godlike schemes and mouselike occupations, their wondrous race-running after Happiness;—he trusting to the gallop of his horse,—he to the nose of his ass,—a third to his own legs; this whirling lottery of life, in which so many a creature stakes his innocence, and—his Heaven! all trying for a prize, and—blanks are the whole drawing,—there was not a prize in the batch. It is a drama, Brother, to bring tears into thy eyes, if it tickle thy midriff to laughter.

SCHWARZ. How gloriously the sun is setting yonder!

MOOR [*lost in the view*]. So dies a Hero! To be worshipped!

GRIMM. It seems to move thee.

MOOR. When I was a lad—it was my darling thought to live so, to die so—[*with suppressed pain*]. It was a lad's thought!

GRIMM. I hope so, truly.

MOOR [*draws his hat down on his face*]. There was a time—Leave me alone, comrades.

SCHWARZ. Moor! Moor! What, Devil?—How his colour goes!

GRIMM. Ha! What ails him? Is he ill?

MOOR. There was a time when I could not sleep, if my evening prayer had been forgotten——

GRIMM. Art thou going crazed? Will Moor let such milksop fancies tutor him?

MOOR [*lays his head on Grimm's breast*]. Brother! Brother!

GRIMM. Come! don't be a child—I beg——

MOOR. Were I a child!—O, were I one!

GRIMM. Pooh! pooh!

SCHWARZ. Cheer up. Look at the brave landscape,—the fine evening.

MOOR. Yes, Friends, this world is all so lovely.

SCHWARZ. There now—that's right.

MOOR. This Earth so glorious.

GRIMM. Right,—right—that is it.

MOOR [*sinking back*]. And I so hideous in this lovely world, and I a monster in this glorious Earth.

GRIMM. Out on it!

MOOR. My innocence! My innocence!—See, all things are gone forth to bask in the peaceful beam of the Spring: why must I alone inhale the torments of Hell out of the joys of Heaven?—That all should be so happy, all so married together by the spirit of peace!—The whole world *one* family, its Father above—that Father not *mine!*—I alone the castaway,—I alone struck out from the company of the just;—for me no child to lisp my name,—never for me the languishing look of one whom I love,—never, never, the embracing of a bosom-friend [*dashing wildly back*]. Encircled with murderers,—serpents hissing round me,—rushing down to the gulf of perdition on the eddying torrent of wickedness,—amid the flowers of the glad world, a howling Abaddon!

SCHWARZ [*to the rest*]. How *is* this? I never saw him so.

MOOR [*with piercing sorrow*]. O, that I might return into my mother's womb,—that I might be born a beggar!—No! I durst not pray, O Heaven, to be as one of these day-labourers—O, I would toil till the blood ran down my temples to buy myself the pleasure of one noontide sleep,—the blessedness of a single tear!

GRIMM [*to the rest*]. Patience, a moment. The fit is passing.

MOOR. There *was* a time, too, when I could weep—O ye days of peace, thou castle of my father, ye green lovely valleys! O all ye Elysian scenes of my childhood! will ye never come again, never with your balmy sighing cool my burning bosom! Mourn with me, Nature! They will never come again, never cool my burning bosom with their balmy sighing. They are gone! gone! and will not return!

Or take that still wilder monologue of Moor's on the old subject of suicide; in the midnight Forest, among the sleeping Robbers:

He lays aside the lute, and walks up and down in deep thought.

Who shall warrant me?——'Tis all so dark,—perplexed labyrinths,—no outlet, no loadstar—Were it but *over* with this last draught of breath—*Over* like a sorry farce.—But whence this fierce *Hunger* after *Happiness?* whence this ideal of a *never-reached* perfection? this *continuation* of uncompleted plans?—if the pitiful pressure of this pitiful thing [*holding out a Pistol*] makes the wise man equal with the fool, the coward with the brave, the noble-minded with the caitiff?—There is so divine a harmony in all irrational Nature, why should there be this dissonance in rational?—No! no! there is somewhat beyond, for I have yet never known happiness.

Think ye, I will tremble? spirits of my murdered ones! I will not tremble [*trembling violently*].—Your feeble dying moan,—your black-choked faces,—your frightfully-gaping wounds are but links of an unbreakable chain of Destiny; and depend at last on my childish sports, on the whims of my nurses and pedagogues, on the temperament of my father, on the blood of my mother—[*shaken with horror*]. Why has my Perillus made of me a Brazen Bull to roast mankind in my glowing belly?

[*Gazing on the Pistol*] TIME and ETERNITY—linked together by a single moment!—Dread key, that shuttest behind me the prison of Life, and before me openest the dwelling of eternal Night—say—O, say,—*whither*,—*whither* wilt thou lead me? Foreign, never circumnavigated Land!—See, manhood waxes faint under *this* image; the effort of the finite gives up, and Fancy, the capricious ape of Sense, juggles our credulity with strange shadows.—No! no! It becomes not a man to waver. Be what thou wilt, *nameless Yonder*—so this Me keep but true. Be what thou wilt, so I take *myself* along with me—!

—Outward things are but the colouring of the man—I am my Heaven and my Hell.

What if Thou shouldst send me *companionless* to some burnt and blasted circle of the Universe; which Thou hast banished from thy sight; where the lone darkness and the motionless desert were my prospects—forever?—I would people the silent wilderness with my fantasies; I should have Eternity for leisure to unravel the perplexed image of the boundless woe.—Or wilt Thou lead me through still other births; still other scenes of pain, from stage to stage—onwards to Annihilation? The life-threads that are to be woven for me Yonder, cannot I tear them asunder, as I do these?—Thou canst make me Nothing;—but *this* freedom canst Thou not take from me. [*He loads the Pistol. Suddenly he stops.*] And shall I for terror of a miserable life—die?—Shall I give wretchedness the victory over me?—No, I will endure it [*he throws the Pistol away*]. Let misery blunt itself on my pride! I will go through with it.*

And now with these ferocities, and Sibylline frenzies, compare the placid strength of the following delineation, also of a stern character, from the *Maid of Orleans;* where Talbot, the gray veteran, dark, unbelieving, indomitable, passes down, as he thinks, to the land of utter Nothingness, contemptuous even of the Fate that destroys him, and

> In death reposes on the soil of France,
> Like hero on his unsurrendered shield.

It is the sixth Scene of the third Act; in the heat of a Battle:

The scene changes to an open Space encircled with Trees. During the music Soldiers are seen hastily retreating across the Background.

TALBOT, *leaning on* FASTOLF, *and accompanied by Soldiers. Soon after,* LIONEL.

TALBOT.

Here, set me down beneath this tree, and you
Betake yourselves again to battle: quick!
I need no help to die.

FASTOLF.

O day of woe! [*Lionel enters.*
Look what a sight awaits you, Lionel!
Our leader wounded, dying!

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* Act iv. Scene 6.

LIONEL.

God forbid !
O noble Talbot, this is not a time to die :
Yield not to Death ; force faltering Nature
By your strength of soul, that life depart not !

TALBOT.

In vain ! the day of Destiny is come
That levels with the dust our power in France.
In vain, in the fierce clash of desp'rate battle,
Have I risk'd my utmost to withstand it :
The bolt has smote and crush'd me, and I lie
To rise no more forever. Rheims is lost ;
Make haste to rescue Paris.

LIONEL.

Paris is the Dauphin's :
A post arrived even now with th' evil news
It had surrender'd.

TALBOT [*tears away his bandages*].

Then flow out, ye life-streams ;
This sun is growing loathsome to me.

LIONEL.

Fastolf,
Convey him to the rear : this post can hold
Few instants more ; yon coward knaves fall back,
Resistless comes the Witch, and havoc round her.

TALBOT.

Madness, thou conquerest, and I must yield :
Against Stupidity the Gods themselves are powerless.
High Reason, radiant Daughter of the head of God,
Wise Foundress of the system of the Universe,
Conductress of the Stars, who art thou, then,
If tied to th' tail o' th' wild horse, Superstition,
Thou must plunge, eyes open, vainly shrieking,
Sheer down with that drunk Beast to the Abyss?
Cursed who sets his life upon the great
And dignified ; and with forecasting spirit
Lays out wise plans ! The Fool-King's is this World.

LIONEL.

O ! Death is near ! Think of your God, and pray !

TALBOT.

Were we, as brave men, worsted by the brave,
'T had been but Fortune's common fickleness :
But that a paltry Farce should tread us down !—
Did toil and peril, all our earnest life,
Deserve no graver issue ?

LIONEL [*grasps his hand*].

Talbot, farewell !
The meed of bitter tears I'll duly pay you,
When the fight is done, should I outlive it.
But now Fate calls me to the field, where yet
She wav'ring sits, and shakes her doubtful urn.
Farewell ! we meet beyond the unseen shore.
Brief parting for long friendship ! God be with you ! [*Exit.*

TALBOT.

Soon it is over, and to th' Earth I render,
To th' everlasting Sun, the transient atoms
Which for pain and pleasure join'd to form me ;
And of the mighty Talbot, whose renown
Once fill'd the world, remains nought but a handful
Of flitting dust. Thus man comes to his end ;
And all our conquest in the fight of Life
Is knowledge that 'tis Nothing, and contempt
For hollow shows which once we chas'd and worship'd.

SCENE VII.

Enter CHARLES, BURGUNDY, DUNOIS, DU CHATEL, *and Soldiers.*

BURGUNDY.

The trench is stormed.

DUNOIS.

Bravo ! The fight is ours.

CHARLES [*observing Talbot*].

Ha ! who is this that to the light of day
Is bidding his constrained and sad farewell ?
His bearing speaks no common man : go, haste,
Assist him, if assistance yet avail.
[*Soldiers from the Dauphin's suite step forward.*

FASTOLF.

Back! Keep away! Approach not the Departing,
Him whom in life ye never wished too near.

BURGUNDY.

What do I see? Great Talbot in his blood!
[*He goes towards him. Talbot gazes fixedly at him, and dies.*

FASTOLF.

Off, Burgundy! With th' aspect of a Traitor
Disturb not the last moment of a Hero.

The 'Power-words and Thunder-words,' as the Germans call them, so frequent in the *Robbers*,* are altogether wanting here; that volcanic fury has assuaged itself; instead of smoke and red lava, we have sunshine and a verdant world. For still more striking examples of this benignant change, we might refer to many scenes (too long for our present purposes) in *Wallenstein*, and indeed in all the Dramas which followed this, and most of all in *Wilhelm Tell*, which is the latest of them. The careful, and in general truly poetic structure of these works, considered as complete Poems, would exhibit it infinitely better; but for this object, larger limits than ours at present, and studious Readers as well as a Reviewer, were essential.

In his smaller Poems the like progress is visible. Schiller's works should all be dated, as we study them; but indeed the most, by internal evidence, date themselves.—Besides the *Lied der Glocke*, already mentioned, there are many lyrical pieces of high merit; particularly a whole series of *Ballads*, nearly every one of which is true and poetical. The *Ritter Toggenburg*, the *Dragon-fight*, the *Diver*, are all well known; the *Cranes of Ibycus* has in it, under this simple form, something Old-Grecian, an emphasis, a prophetic gloom which might seem borrowed even from the spirit of Æschylus. But on these, or any farther on the other poetical works of Schiller, we must not dilate at present. One little piece, which lies by us translated, we may give, as a specimen of his style in this lyrical province, and therewith terminate this part of our subject. It is entitled *Alpenlied* (Song of the Alps), and seems to require no commentary. Perhaps something of the clear, melodious, yet still

* Thus, to take one often-cited instance, Moor's simple question, 'Whether there is any powder left?' receives this emphatic answer: 'Powder enough to blow the Earth into the Moon!'

somewhat metallic tone of the original may penetrate even through our version.

SONG OF THE ALPS.

By the edge of the chasm is a slippery Track,
The torrent beneath, and the mist hanging o'er thee;
The cliffs of the mountain, huge, rugged and black,
Are frowning like giants before thee:
And, wouldst thou not waken the sleeping Lawine,
Walk silent and soft through the deadly ravine.

That Bridge, with its dizzying perilous span,
Aloft o'er the gulf and its flood suspended,
Think'st thou it was built by the art of man,
By his hand that grim old arch was bended?
Far down in the jaws of the gloomy abyss
The water is boiling and hissing,—forever will hiss.

That Gate through the rocks is as darksome and drear,
As if to the region of Shadows it carried:
Yet enter! A sweet laughing landscape is here,
Where the Spring with the Autumn is married.
From the world with its sorrows and warfare and wail,
O, could I but hide in this bright little vale!

Four Rivers rush down from on high,
Their spring will be hidden forever;
Their course is to all the four points of the sky,
To each point of the sky is a river;
And fast as they start from their old Mother's feet,
They dash forth, and no more will they meet.

Two Pinnacles rise to the depths of the Blue:
Aloft on their white summits glancing,
Bedeck'd in their garments of golden dew,
The Clouds of the sky are dancing;
There threading alone their lightsome maze,
Uplifted apart from all mortals' gaze.

And high on her ever-enduring throne
The Queen of the mountains reposes;
Her head serene, and azure, and lone,
A diamond crown encloses;
The Sun with his darts shoots round it keen and hot,
He gilds it always, he warms it not.

Of Schiller's Philosophic talent, still more of the results he had arrived at in philosophy, there were much to be said and thought; which we must not enter upon here. As hinted above, his primary endowment seems to us fully as much philosophical as poetical: his intellect, at all events, is peculiarly of that character; strong, penetrating, yet systematic and scholastic, rather than intuitive; and manifesting this tendency both in the objects it treats, and in its mode of treating them. The Transcendental Philosophy, which arose in Schiller's busiest era, could not remain without influence on him: he had carefully studied Kant's System, and appears to have not only admitted but zealously appropriated its fundamental doctrines; remoulding them, however, into his own peculiar forms, so that they seem no longer borrowed, but permanently acquired, not less Schiller's than Kant's. Some, perhaps little aware of his natural wants and tendencies, are of opinion that these speculations did not profit him: Schiller himself, on the other hand, appears to have been well contented with his Philosophy; in which, as harmonised with his Poetry, the assurance and safe anchorage for his moral nature might lie.

'From the opponents of the New Philosophy,' says he, 'I expect not that tolerance, which is shown to every other system, no better seen into than this: for Kant's Philosophy itself, in its leading points, practises no tolerance; and bears much too rigorous a character, to leave any room for accommodation. But in my eyes this does it honour; proving how little it can endure to have truth tampered with. Such a Philosophy will not be discussed with a mere shake of the head. In the open, clear, accessible field of Inquiry it builds up its system; seeks no shade, makes no reservation: but even as it treats its neighbours, so it requires to be treated; and may be forgiven for lightly esteeming everything but Proofs. Nor am I terrified to think that the Law of Change, from which no human and no divine work finds grace, will operate on this Philosophy, as on every other, and one day its Form will be destroyed: but its Foundations will not have this destiny to fear; for ever since mankind has existed, and any Reason among mankind, these same first principles have been admitted, and on the whole acted upon.' *

Schiller's philosophical performances relate chiefly to matters of Art; not, indeed, without significant glances into still more important regions of speculation: nay Art, as he viewed it, has

* *Correspondence with Goethe*, i. 58.

its basis on the most important interests of man, and of itself involves the harmonious adjustment of these. We have already undertaken to present our readers, on a future occasion, with some abstract of the *Æsthetic Letters*, one of the deepest, most compact pieces of reasoning we are anywhere acquainted with: by that opportunity, the general character of Schiller, as a Philosopher, will best fall to be discussed. Meanwhile, the two following brief passages, as some indication of his views on the highest of all philosophical questions, may stand here without commentary. He is speaking of *Wilhelm Meister*, and in the first extract, of the *Fair Saint's Confessions*, which occupy the Sixth Book of that work:—

'The transition from Religion in general to the Christian Religion, by the experience of sin, is excellently conceived. * * * I find virtually in the Christian System the rudiments of the Highest and Noblest; and the different phases of this System, in practical life, are so offensive and mean, precisely because they are bungled representations of that same Highest. If you study the specific character of Christianity, what distinguishes it from all monotheistic Religions, it lies in nothing else than in that *making-dead of the Law*, the removal of that Kantean Imperative, instead of which Christianity requires a free Inclination. It is thus, in its pure form, a representing of Moral Beauty, or the Incarnation of the Holy; and in this sense, the only *æsthetic* Religion: hence, too, I explain to myself why it so prospers with female natures, and only in women is now to be met with under a tolerable figure.' *

'But in seriousness,' he says elsewhere, 'whence may it proceed that you have had a man educated, and in all points equipt, without ever coming upon certain wants which only Philosophy can meet? I am convinced it is entirely attributable to the *æsthetic direction* you have taken, through the whole Romance. Within the æsthetic temper there arises no want of those grounds of comfort, which are to be drawn from speculation: such a temper has self-subsistence, has infinitude, within itself; only when the Sensual and the Moral in man strive hostilely together, need help be sought of pure Reason. A healthy poetic nature wants, as you yourself say, no Moral Law, no Rights of Man, no Political Metaphysics. You might have added as well, it wants no Deity, no Immortality, to stay and uphold itself withal. Those three points round which, in the long-run, all speculation turns, may in truth afford such a nature matter for poetic play, but can never become serious concerns and necessities for it.' †

This last seems a singular opinion; and may prove, if it be correct, that Schiller himself was no 'healthy poetic nature;'

* *Correspondence*, i. 195. † Ib. ii. 131.

for undoubtedly with him those three points were 'serious concerns and necessities;' as many portions of his works, and various entire treatises, will testify. Nevertheless, it plays an important part in his theories of Poetry; and often, under milder forms, returns on us there.

But, without entering farther on those complex topics, we must here for the present take leave of Schiller. Of his merits we have all along spoken rather on the negative side; and we rejoice in feeling authorised to do so. That any German writer, especially one so dear to us, should already stand so high with British readers that, in admiring him, the critic may also, without prejudice to right feeling on the subject, coolly judge of him, cannot be other than a gratifying circumstance. Perhaps there is no other true Poet of that nation with whom the like course would be suitable.

Connected with this there is one farther observation we must make before concluding. Among younger students of German Literature, the question often arises, and is warmly mooted: Whether Schiller or Goethe is the greater Poet? Of this question we must be allowed to say that it seems rather a slender one, and for two reasons. First, because Schiller and Goethe are of totally dissimilar endowments and endeavours, in regard to all matters intellectual, and cannot well be compared together as Poets. Secondly, because if the question mean to ask, which Poet is on the whole the rarer and more excellent, as probably it does, it must be considered as long ago abundantly answered. To the clear-sighted and modest Schiller, above all, such a question would have appeared surprising. No one knew better than himself, that as Goethe was a born Poet, so he was in great part a made Poet; that as the one spirit was intuitive, all-embracing, instinct with melody, so the other was scholastic, divisive, only partially and as it were artificially melodious. Besides, Goethe has lived to perfect his natural gift, which the less happy Schiller was not permitted to do. The former accordingly is the national Poet; the latter is not, and never could have been. We once heard a German remark that readers till their twenty-fifth year usually prefer Schiller; after their twenty-fifth year, Goethe. This probably was no unfair illustration of the question. Schiller can seem higher than Goethe only because he is narrower. Thus to unpractised eyes, a Peak of Teneriffe, nay a Strasburg Minster, when we stand on it, may seem higher than a Chimborazo; because the former

rise abruptly, without abutment or environment; the latter rises gradually, carrying half a world aloft with it; and only the deeper azure of the heavens, the widened horizon, the 'eternal sunshine,' disclose to the geographer that the 'Region of Change' lies far below him.

However, let us not divide these two Friends, who in life were so benignantly united. Without asserting for Schiller any claim that even enemies can dispute, enough will remain for him. We may say that, as a Poet and Thinker, he attained to a perennial Truth, and ranks among the noblest productions of his century and nation. Goethe may continue *the* German Poet, but neither through long generations can Schiller be forgotten. 'His works too, the memory of what he did and was, will arise afar off like a towering landmark in the solitude of the Past, when distance shall have dwarfed into invisibility many lesser people that once encompassed him, and hid him from the near beholder.'

THE NIBELUNGEN LIED.*

[1831.]

In the year 1757, the Swiss Professor Bodmer printed an ancient poetical manuscript, under the title of *Chriemhilden Rache und die Klage* (Chriemhilde's Revenge, and the Lament); which may be considered as the first of a series, or stream of publications and speculations still rolling on, with increased current, to the present day. Not, indeed, that all these had their source or determining cause in so insignificant a circumstance; their source, or rather thousand sources, lay far elsewhere. As has often been remarked, a certain antiquarian tendency in literature, a fonder, more earnest looking back into the Past, began about that time to manifest itself in all nations (witness our own *Percy's Reliques*): this was among the first distinct symptoms of it in Germany; where, as with ourselves, its manifold effects are still visible enough.

Some fifteen years after Bodmer's publication, which, for the rest, is not celebrated as an editorial feat, one C. H. Müller undertook a *Collection of German Poems from the Twelfth, Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries;* wherein, among other articles, he reprinted Bodmer's *Chriemhilde* and *Klage*, with a highly remarkable addition prefixed to the former, essential indeed to the right understanding of it; and the whole now stood before the world as one Poem, under the name of the *Nibelungen Lied*, or Lay of the Nibelungen. It has since been ascertained that the *Klage* is a foreign inferior appendage; at best, related only as epilogue to the main work: meanwhile out

* Westminster Review, No. 29.—*Das Nibelungen Lied, übersetzt von Karl Simrock* (The Nibelungen Lied, translated by Karl Simrock). 2 vols. 12mo. Berlin, 1827.

of this *Nibelungen*, such as it was, there soon proceeded new inquiries and kindred enterprises. For much as the Poem, in the shape it here bore, was defaced and marred, it failed not to attract observation: to all open-minded lovers of poetry, especially where a strong patriotic feeling existed, the singular antique *Nibelungen* was an interesting appearance. Johannes Müller, in his famous *Swiss History*, spoke of it in warm terms: subsequently, August Wilhelm Schlegel, through the medium of the *Deutsche Museum*, succeeded in awakening something like a universal popular feeling on the subject; and, as a natural consequence, a whole host of Editors and Critics, of deep and of shallow endeavour, whose labours we yet see in progress. The *Nibelungen* has now been investigated, translated, collated, commented upon, with more or less result, to almost boundless lengths: besides the Work named at the head of this Paper, and which stands there simply as one of the latest, we have Versions into the modern tongue by Von der Hagen, by Hinsberg, Lachmann, Büsching, Zeune, the last in Prose, and said to be worthless; Criticisms, Introductions, Keys, and so forth, by innumerable others, of whom we mention only Docen and the Brothers Grimm.

By which means, not only has the Poem itself been elucidated with all manner of researches, but its whole environment has come forth in new light: the scene and personages it relates to, the other fictions and traditions connected with it, have attained a new importance and coherence. Manuscripts, that for ages had lain dormant, have issued from their archives into public view; books that had circulated only in mean guise for the amusement of the people, have become important, not to one or two virtuosos, but to the general body of the learned: and now a whole System of antique Teutonic Fiction and Mythology unfolds itself, shedding here and there a real though feeble and uncertain glimmer over what was once the total darkness of the old Time. No fewer than Fourteen ancient Traditionary Poems, all strangely intertwisted, and growing out of and into one another, have come to light among the Germans; who now, in looking back, find that they too, as well as the Greeks, have their Heroic Age, and round the old Valhalla, as their Northern Pantheon, a world of demi-gods and wonders.

Such a phenomenon, unexpected till of late, cannot but interest a deep-thinking, enthusiastic people. For the *Nibelungen* especially, which lies in the centre and distinct keystone of the whole too chaotic System,—let us say rather, blooms as

a firm sunny island in the middle of these cloud-covered, ever-shifting sand-whirlpools,—they cannot sufficiently testify their love and veneration. Learned professors lecture on the *Nibelungen* in public schools, with a praiseworthy view to initiate the German youth in love of their fatherland; from many zealous and nowise ignorant critics we hear talk of a 'great Northern Epos,' of a 'German Iliad'; the more saturnine are shamed into silence, or hollow mouth-homage: thus from all quarters comes a sound of joyful acclamation; the *Nibelungen* is welcomed as a precious national possession, recovered after six centuries of neglect, and takes undisputed place among the sacred books of German literature.

Of these curious transactions some rumour has not failed to reach us in England, where our minds, from their own antiquarian disposition, were willing enough to receive it. Abstracts and extracts of the *Nibelungen* have been printed in our language; there have been disquisitions on it in our Reviews: hitherto, however, such as nowise to exhaust the subject. On the contrary, where so much was to be told at once, the speaker might be somewhat puzzled where to begin: it was a much readier method to begin with the end, or with any part of the middle, than like Hamilton's Ram (whose example is too little followed in literary narrative) to begin with the beginning. Thus has our stock of intelligence come rushing out on us quite promiscuously and pellmell; whereby the whole matter could not but acquire a tortuous, confused, altogether inexplicable and even dreary aspect; and the class of 'well-informed persons' now find themselves in that uncomfortable position, where they are obliged to profess admiration, and at the same time feel that, except by name, they know not what the thing admired is. Such a position towards the venerable *Nibelungen*, which is no less bright and graceful than historically significant, cannot be the right one. Moreover, as appears to us, it might be somewhat mended by very simple means. Let any one that had honestly read the *Nibelungen*, which in these days is no surprising achievement, only tell us what he found there, and nothing that he did not find: we should then know something, and, what were still better, be ready for knowing more. To search out the secret roots of such a production, ramified through successive layers of centuries, and drawing nourishment from each, may be work, and too hard work, for the deepest philosopher and critic; but to look with natural eyes on what part of it stands visibly above

ground, and record his own experiences thereof, is what any reasonable mortal, if he will take heed, can do.

Some such slight service we here intend proffering to our readers: let them glance with us a little into that mighty maze of Northern Archæology; where, it may be, some pleasant prospects will open. If the *Nibelungen* is what we have called it, a firm sunny island amid the weltering chaos of antique tradition, it must be worth visiting on general grounds; nay if the primeval rudiments of it have the antiquity assigned them, it belongs specially to us English *Teutones* as well as to the Germans.

Far be it from us, meanwhile, to venture rashly, or farther than is needful, into that same traditionary chaos, fondly named the 'Cycle of Northern Fiction,' with its Fourteen Sectors (or separate Poems), which are rather Fourteen shoreless Limbos, where we hear of pieces containing 'a hundred thousand verses,' and 'seventy thousand verses,' as of a quite natural affair! How travel through that inane country; by what art discover the little grain of Substance that casts such multiplied immeasurable Shadows? The primeval Mythus, were it at first philosophical truth, or were it historical incident, floats too vaguely on the breath of men: each successive Singer and Redactor furnishes it with new personages, new scenery, to please a new audience; each has the privilege of inventing, and the far wider privilege of borrowing and new-modelling from *all* that have preceded him. Thus though Tradition may have but one root, it grows like a Banian, into a whole overarching labyrinth of trees. Or rather might we say, it is a Hall of Mirrors, where in pale light each mirror reflects, convexly or concavely, not only some real Object, but the Shadows of this in other mirrors; which again do the like for it: till in such reflection and re-reflection the whole immensity is filled with dimmer and dimmer shapes; and no firm scene lies round us, but a dislocated, distorted chaos, fading away on all hands, in the distance, into utter night. Only to some brave Von der Hagen, furnished with indefatigable ardour, and a deep, almost religious love, is it given to find sure footing there, and see his way. All those *Dukes of Aquitania*, therefore, and *Etzel's Court-holdings*, and *Dietrichs* and *Sigenots* we shall leave standing where they are. Such as desire farther information will find an intelligible account of the whole Series or Cycle, in Messrs. Weber and Jamieson's *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities;* and all possible furtherance, in the numerous German works above alluded to; among which Von der

Hagen's writings, though not the readiest, are probably the safest guides. But for us, our business here is with the *Nibelungen*, the inhabited poetic country round which all these wildernesses lie; only as environments of which, as routes to which, are they of moment to us. Perhaps our shortest and smoothest route will be through the *Heldenbuch* (Hero-book); which is greatly the most important of these subsidiary Fictions, not without interest of its own, and closely related to the *Nibelungen*. This *Heldenbuch*, therefore, we must now address ourselves to traverse with all despatch. At the present stage of the business too, we shall forbear any historical inquiry and argument concerning the date and local habitation of those Traditions; reserving what little is to be said on that matter till the Traditions themselves have become better known to us. Let the reader, on trust for the present, transport himself into the twelfth or thirteenth century; and therefrom looking back into the sixth or fifth, see what presents itself.

Of the *Heldenbuch*, tried on its own merits, and except as illustrating that other far worthier Poem, or at most as an old national, and still in some measure popular book, we should have felt strongly inclined to say, as the Curate in *Don Quixote* so often did, *Al corral con ello*, Out of window with it! Doubtless there are touches of beauty in the work, and even a sort of heartiness and antique quaintness in its wildest follies; but on the whole that George-and-Dragon species of composition has long ceased to find favour with any one; and except for its groundwork, more or less discernible, of old Northern Fiction, this *Heldenbuch* has little to distinguish it from these. Nevertheless, what is worth remark, it seems to have been a far higher favourite than the *Nibelungen* with ancient readers: it was printed soon after the invention of printing; some think in 1472, for there is no place or date on the first edition; at all events, in 1491, in 1509, and repeatedly since; whereas the *Nibelungen*, though written earlier, and in worth immeasurably superior, had to remain in manuscript three centuries longer. From which, for the thousandth time, inferences might be drawn as to the infallibility of popular taste, and its value as a criterion for poetry. However, it is probably in virtue of this neglect, that the *Nibelungen* boasts of its actual purity; that it now comes before us, clear and graceful as it issued from the old Singer's head and heart; not overloaded with Ass-eared Giants, Fiery Dragons, Dwarfs and Hairy Women,

as the *Heldenbuch* is, many of which, as charity would hope, may be the produce of a later age than that famed *Swabian Era*, to which these poems, as we now see them, are commonly referred. Indeed, one Casper von Roen is understood to have passed the whole *Heldenbuch* through his limbec, in the fifteenth century; but like other rectifiers, instead of purifying it, to have only drugged it with still fiercer ingredients to suit the sick appetite of the time.

Of this drugged and adulterated *Hero-book* (the only one we yet have, though there is talk of a better) we shall quote the long Title-page of Lessing's Copy, the edition of 1560; from which, with a few intercalated observations, the reader's curiosity may probably obtain what little satisfaction it wants:

Das Heldenbuch, welchs auffs new corrigirt und gebessert ist, mit shönen Figuren geziert. Gedrückt zu Frankfurt am Mayn, durch Weygand Han und Sygmund Feyerabend, &c. That is to say:

'The *Hero-book*, which is of new corrected and improved, adorned with beautiful Figures. Printed at Frankfurt on the Mayn, through Weygand Han and Sygmund Feyerabend.

'*Part First* saith of Kaiser Ottnit and the little King Elberich, how they with great peril, over sea, in Heathendom, won from a king his daughter (and how he in lawful marriage took her to wife).'

From which announcement the reader already guesses the contents: how this little King Elberich was a Dwarf or Elf, some half-span long, yet full of cunning practices, and the most helpful activity; nay, stranger still, had been Kaiser Ottnit of *Lampartei* or Lombardy's father,—having had his own ulterior views in that indiscretion. How they sailed with Messina ships, into Paynim land; fought with that unspeakable Turk, King Machabol, in and about his fortress and metropolis of Montebur, which was all stuck round with christian heads; slew from seventy to a hundred thousand of the Infidels at one heat; saw the lady on the battlements; and at length, chiefly by Dwarf Elberich's help, carried her off in triumph; wedded her in Messina; and without difficulty, rooting out the Mahometan prejudice, converted her to the creed of Mother Church. The fair runaway seems to have been of a gentle tractable disposition, very different from old Machabol; concerning whom it is here chiefly to be noted that Dwarf Elberich, rendering himself invisible on their first interview, plucks out a handful of hair from his chin; thereby increasing to a tenfold pitch the

royal choler; and, what is still more remarkable, furnishing the poet Wieland, six centuries afterwards, with the critical incident in his *Oberon*. As for the young lady herself, we cannot but admit that she was well worth sailing to Heathendom for; and shall here, as our sole specimen of that old German doggerel, give the description of her, as she first appeared on the battlements during the fight; subjoining a version as verbal and literal as the plainest prose can make it. Considered as a detached passage, it is perhaps the finest we have met with in the *Heldenbuch*.

Ihr herz brann also schone,
Recht als ein rot rubein,
Gleich dem vollen mone
Gaben ihr äuglein schein.
Sich hett die maget reine
Mit rosen wohl bekleid
Und auch mit berlin kleine;
Niemand da tröst die meid.

Her heart burnt (with anxiety) as beautiful
Just as a red ruby,
Like the full moon
Her eyes (eyelings, pretty eyes) gave sheen.
Herself had the maiden pure
Well adorned with roses,
And also with pearls small:
No one there comforted the maid.

Sie war schön an dem leibe,
Und zu den seiten schmal;
Recht als ein kertze scheibe
Wohlgeschaffen überall:
Ihr beyden händ gemeine
Dars ihr gentz nichts gebrach;
Ihr näglein schön und reine,
Das man sich darin besach.

She was fair of body,
And in the waist slender;
Right as a (golden) candlestick
Well-fashioned everywhere:
Her two hands proper,
So that she wanted nought:
Her little nails fair and pure,
That you could see yourself therein.

Ihr har war schön umbfangen
Mit edler seiden fein;
Das liess sie nieder hangen,
Das hübsche magedlein.
Sie trug ein kron mit steinen,
Sie war von gold so rot;
Elberich dem viel kleinen
War zu der magte not.

Her hair was beautifully girt
With noble silk (band) fine;
She let it flow down,
The lovely maidling.
She wore a crown with jewels,
It was of gold so red:
For Elberich the very small
The maid had need (to console her).

Da vornen in den kronen
Lag ein karfunkelstein,
Der in dem pallast schonen
Aecht als ein kertz erschein;
Auf jrem haupt das hare
War lauter und auch fein,
Es leuchtet also klare
Recht als der sonnen schein.

There in front of the crown
Lay a carbuncle-stone,
Which in the palace fair
Even as a taper seemed;
On her head the hair
Was glossy and also fine,
It shone as bright
Even as the sun's sheen.

Die magt die stand alleine,
Gar trawrig war jr mut;
Ihr farb und die war reine,
Lieblich we milch und blut;
Her durch jr zöpffe reinen
Schien jr hals als der schnee;
Elberich dem viel kleinen
That der maget jammer weh.

The maid she stood alone,
Right sad was her mind;

Her colour it was pure,
Lovely as milk and blood:
Out through her pure locks
Shone her neck like the snow.
Elberich the very small
Was touched with the maiden's sorrow.

Happy man was Kaiser Ottnit, blessed with such a wife, after all his travail;—had not the Turk Machabol cunningly sent him, in revenge, a box of young Dragons, or Dragon-eggs, by the hands of a caitiff Infidel, contriver of the mischief; by whom in due course of time they were hatched and nursed, to the infinite woe of all Lampartei, and ultimately to the death of Kaiser Ottnit himself, whom they swallowed and attempted to digest, once without effect, but the next time too fatally, crown and all!

'*Part Second* announceth (*meldet*) of Herr Hugdietrich and his son Wolfdietrich; how they, for justice-sake, oft by their doughty acts succoured distressed persons, with other bold heroes that stood by them in extremity.'

Concerning which Hugdietrich, Emperor of Greece, and his son Wolfdietrich, one day the renowned Dietrich of Bern, we can here say little more than that the former trained himself to sempstress-work; and for many weeks plied his needle, before he could get wedded and produce Wolfdietrich; who coming into the world in this clandestine manner, was let down into the castle-ditch, and like Romulus and Remus nursed by a Wolf, whence his name. However, after never-imagined adventures, with enchanters and enchantresses, pagans and giants, in all quarters of the globe, he finally, with utmost effort, slaughtered those Lombardy Dragons; then married Kaiser Ottnit's widow, whom he had rather flirted with before; and so lived universally respected in his new empire, performing yet other notable achievements. One strange property he had, sometimes useful to him, sometimes hurtful: that his breath, when he became angry, grew flame, red-hot, and would take the temper out of swords. We find him again in the *Nibelungen*, among King Etzel's (Attila's) followers; a staid, cautious, yet still invincible man; on which occasion, though with great reluctance, he is forced to interfere, and does so with effect. Dietrich is the favourite hero of all those Southern Fictions, and well acknowledged in the Northern also, where the chief man, however, as we shall find, is not he but Siegfried.

'*Part Third* showeth of the Rose-garden at Worms, which was planted by Chrimhilte, King Gibich's daughter; whereby afterwards most part of those Heroes and Giants came to destruction and were slain.'

In this Third Part the Southern or Lombard Heroes come into contact and collision with another as notable Northern class, and for us much more important. Chriemhild, whose ulterior history makes such a figure in the *Nibelungen*, had, it would seem, near the ancient city of Worms, a Rose-garden, some seven English miles in circuit; fenced only by a silk thread; wherein, however, she maintained Twelve stout fighting-men; several of whom, as Hagen, Volker, her three Brothers, above all the gallant Siegfried her betrothed, we shall meet with again: these, so unspeakable was their prowess, sufficed to defend the silk-thread Garden against all mortals. Our good antiquary, Von der Hagen, imagines that this Rose-garden business (in the primeval Tradition) glances obliquely at the Ecliptic with its Twelve Signs, at Jupiter's fight with the Titans, and we know not what confused skirmishing in the Utgard, or Asgard, or Midgard of the Scandinavians. Be this as it may, Chriemhild, we are here told, being very beautiful and very wilful, boasts, in the pride of her heart, that no heroes on earth are to be compared with hers; and hearing accidentally that Dietrich of Bern has a high character in this line, forthwith challenges him to visit Worms, and with eleven picked men to do battle there against those other Twelve champions of Christendom that watch her Rose-garden. Dietrich, in a towering passion at the style of the message, which was 'surly and stout,' instantly pitches upon his eleven seconds, who also are to be principals; and with a retinue of other sixty thousand, by quick stages, in which obstacles enough are overcome, reaches Worms, and declares himself ready. Among these eleven Lombard heroes of his are likewise several whom we meet with again in the *Nibelungen;* beside Dietrich himself, we have the old Duke Hildebrand, Wolfhart, Ortwin. Notable among them, in another way, is Monk Ilsan, a truculent gray-bearded fellow, equal to any Friar Tuck in *Robin Hood.*

The conditions of fight are soon agreed on: there are to be twelve successive duels, each challenger being expected to find his match; and the prize of victory is a Rose-garland from Chriemhild, and *ein Helssen und ein Küssen*, that is to say virtually, one kiss from her fair lips to each. But here as it

ever should do, Pride gets a fall; for Chriemhild's bully-hectors are, in divers ways, all successively felled to the ground by the Berners; some of whom, as old Hildebrand, will not even take her Kiss when it is due: even Siegfried himself, most reluctantly engaged with by Dietrich, and for a while victorious, is at last forced to seek shelter in her lap. Nay, Monk Ilsan, after the regular fight is over, and his part in it well performed, calls out in succession fifty-two other idle Champions of the Garden, part of them Giants, and routs the whole fraternity; thereby earning, besides his own regular allowance, fifty-two spare Garlands, and fifty-two several Kisses; in the course of which latter, Chriemhild's cheek, a just punishment as seemed, was scratched to the drawing of blood by his rough beard. It only remains to be added, that King Gibich, Chriemhild's Father, is now fain to do homage for his kingdom to Dietrich; who returns triumphant to his own country; where also, Monk Ilsan, according to promise, distributes these fifty-two Garlands among his fellow Friars, crushing a garland on the bare crown of each, till 'the red blood ran over their ears.' Under which hard, but not undeserved treatment, they all agreed to pray for remission of Ilsan's sins: indeed, such as continued refractory he tied together by the beards, and hung pair-wise over poles: whereby the stoutest soon gave in.

So endeth here this ditty
Of strife from woman's pride:
God on our griefs take pity,
And Mary still by us abide.

'In *Part Fourth* is announced (*gemelt*) of the little King Laurin, the Dwarf, how he encompassed his Rose-garden with so great manhood and art-magic, till at last he was vanquished by the heroes, and forced to become their Juggler, with &c. &c.'

Of which Fourth and happily last part we shall here say nothing; inasmuch as, except that certain of our old heroes again figure there, it has no coherence or connexion with the rest of the *Heldenbuch;* and is simply a new tale, which by way of episode Heinrich von Ofterdingen, as we learn from his own words, had subsequently appended thereto. He says:

Heinrich von Ofterdingen
This story hath been singing,

To the joy of Princes bold,
They gave him silver and gold,
Moreover pennies and garments rich:
Here endeth this Book the which
Doth sing our noble Heroes' story:
God help us all to heavenly glory.

Such is some outline of the famous *Heldenbuch;* on which it is not our business here to add any criticism. The fact that it has so long been popular betokens a certain worth in it; the kind and degree of which is also in some measure apparent. In poetry 'the rude man,' it has been said, 'requires only to see something going on; the man of more refinement wishes to feel; the truly refined man must be made to reflect.' For the first of these classes our *Hero-book*, as has been apparent enough, provides in abundance; for the other two scantily, indeed for the second not at all. Nevertheless our estimate of this work, which as a series of Antique Traditions may have considerable meaning, is apt rather to be too low. Let us remember that this is not the original *Heldenbuch* which we now see; but only a version of it into the Knight-errant dialect of the thirteenth, indeed partly of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with all the fantastic monstrosities, now so trivial, pertaining to that style; under which disguises the really antique earnest groundwork, interesting as old Thought, if not as old Poetry, is all but quite obscured from us. But Antiquarian diligence is now busy with the *Heldenbuch* also, from which what light is in it will doubtless be elicited, and here and there a deformity removed. Though the Ethiop cannot change his skin, there is no need that even he should go abroad unwashed.*

Casper von Roen, or whoever was the ultimate redactor of the *Heldenbuch*, whom Lessing designates as 'a highly ill-informed man,' would have done better had he quite omitted that little King Laurin, 'and his little Rose-garden,' which properly is no Rose-garden at all; and instead thereof introduced

* Our inconsiderable knowledge of the *Heldenbuch* is derived from various secondary sources; chiefly from Lessing's *Werke* (b. xiii.), where the reader will find an epitome of the whole Poem, with Extracts by Herr Fülleborn, from which the above are taken. A still more accessible and larger Abstract, with long specimens translated into verse, stands in the *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities* (pp. 45-167). Von der Hagen has since been employed specially on the *Heldenbuch;* with what result we have not yet learned.

the *Gehörnte Siegfried* (Behorned Siegfried), whose history lies at the heart of the whole Northern Traditions; and, under a rude prose dress, is to this day a real child's-book and people's-book among the Germans. Of this Siegfried we have already seen somewhat in the Rose-garden at Worms; and shall ere long see much more elsewhere; for he is the chief hero of the *Nibelungen:* indeed nowhere can we dip into those old Fictions, whether in Scandinavia or the Rhine-land, but under one figure or another, whether as Dragon-killer and Prince-royal, or as Blacksmith and Horse-subduer, as Sigurd, Sivrit, Siegfried, we are sure to light on him. As his early adventures belong to the strange sort, and will afterwards concern us not a little, we shall here endeavour to piece together some consistent outline of them; so far indeed as that may be possible; for his biographers, agreeing in the main points, differ widely in the details.

First, then, let no one from the title *Gehörnte* (Horned, Behorned), fancy that our brave Siegfried, who was the loveliest as well as the bravest of men, was actually cornuted, and had horns on his brow, though like Michael Angelo's Moses; or even that his skin, to which the epithet *Behorned* refers, was hard like a crocodile's, and not softer than the softest shamoy: for the truth is, his Hornedness means only an Invulnerability, like that of Achilles; which he came by in the following manner. All men agree that Siegfried was a king's son; he was born, as we here have good reason to know, 'at Santen in Netherland,' of Siegemund and the fair Siegelinde; yet by some family misfortune or discord, of which the accounts are very various, he came into singular straits during boyhood; having passed that happy period of life, not under the canopies of costly state, but by the sooty stithy, in one Mimer a Blacksmith's shop. Here, however, he was nowise in his proper element; ever quarrelling with his fellow-apprentices; nay, as some say, breaking the hardest anvils into shivers by his too stout hammering. So that Mimer, otherwise a first-rate Smith, could by no means do with him there. He sends him, accordingly, to the neighbouring forest, to fetch charcoal; well aware that a monstrous Dragon, one Regin, the Smith's own Brother, would meet him and devour him. But far otherwise it proved; Siegfried by main force slew this Dragon, or rather Dragonised Smith's-Brother; made broth of him; and, warned by some significant phenomena, bathed therein; or, as others assert, bathed directly in the monster's blood, without cookery; and hereby attained

that Invulnerability, complete in all respects, save that between his shoulders, where a lime-tree leaf chanced to settle and stick during the process, there was one little spot, a fatal spot as afterwards turned out, left in its natural state.

Siegfried, now seeing through the craft of the Smith, returned home and slew him; then set forth in search of adventures, the bare catalogue of which were long to recite. We mention only two, as subsequently of moment both for him and for us. He is by some said to have courted, and then jilted, the fair and proud Queen Brunhild of Isenland; nay to have thrown down the seven gates of her Castle; and then ridden off with her wild horse Gana, having mounted him in the meadow, and instantly broken him. Some cross passages between him and Queen Brunhild, who understood no jesting, there must clearly have been, so angry is her recognition of him in the *Nibelungen;* nay, she bears a lasting grudge against him there; as he, and indeed she also, one day too sorely felt.

His other grand adventure is with the two sons of the deceased King Nibelung, in Nibelungen-land: these two youths, to whom their father had bequeathed a Hoard or Treasure, beyond all price or computation, Siegfried, 'riding by alone,' found on the side of a mountain, in a state of great perplexity. They had brought out the Treasure from the cave where it usually lay; but how to part it was the difficulty; for, not to speak of gold, there were as many jewels alone 'as twelve wagons in four days and nights, each going three journeys, could carry away;' nay, 'however much you took from it, there was no diminution:' besides, in real property, a Sword, Balmung, of great potency; a Divining-rod, 'which gave power over every one;' and a *Tarnkappe* (or Cloak of Darkness), which not only rendered the wearer invisible, but also gave him twelve men's strength. So that the two Princes Royal, without counsel save from their Twelve stupid Giants, knew not how to fall upon any amicable arrangement; and, seeing Siegfried ride by so opportunely, requested him to be arbiter; offering also the Sword Balmung for his trouble. Siegfried, who readily undertook the impossible problem, did his best to accomplish it; but of course, without effect; nay the two Nibelungen Princes, being of choleric temper, grew impatient, and provoked him; whereupon, with the Sword Balmung he slew them both, and their Twelve Giants (perhaps originally Signs of the Zodiac) to boot. Thus did the famous *Nibelungen Hort* (Hoard), and indeed the whole Nibelungen-land, come into his possession: wearing the Sword Balmung,

and having slain the two Princes and their Champions, what was there farther to oppose him? Vainly did the Dwarf Alberich, our old friend Elberich of the *Heldenbuch*, who had now become special keeper of this Hoard, attempt some resistance with a Dwarf Army; he was driven back into the cave; plundered of his *Tarnkappe;* and obliged, with all his myrmidons, to swear fealty to the conqueror, whom indeed thenceforth he and they punctually obeyed.

Whereby Siegfried might now farther style himself King of the Nibelungen; master of the infinite Nibelungen Hoard (collected doubtless by art-magic in the beginning of Time, in the deep bowels of the Universe), with the *Wünschelruthe* (Wishing or Divining-rod) pertaining thereto; owner of the *Tarnkappe*, which he ever after kept by him, to put on at will; and though last not least, Bearer and Wielder of the Sword Balmung,* by the keen edge of which all this gain had come to

* By this Sword Balmung also hangs a tale. Doubtless it was one of those invaluable weapons sometimes fabricated by the old Northern Smiths, compared with which our modern Foxes and Ferraras and Toledos are mere leaden tools. Von der Hagen seems to think it simply the Sword Mimung under another name; in which case Siegfried's old master, Mimer, had been the maker of it, and called it after himself, as if it had been his son. In Scandinavian chronicles, veridical or not, we have the following account of that transaction. Mimer (or, as some have it, surely without ground, one Velint, once an apprentice of his) was challenged by another Craftsman, named Amilias, who boasted that he had made a suit of armour which no stroke could dint,—to equal that feat, or own himself the second Smith then extant. This last the stout Mimer would in no case do, but proceeded to forge the Sword Mimung; with which, when it was finished, he, 'in presence of the King,' cut asunder 'a thread of wool floating on water.' This would have seemed a fair fire-edge to most smiths: not so to Mimer; he sawed the blade in pieces, welded it in 'a red-hot fire for three days,' tempered it 'with milk and oatmeal,' and by much other cunning brought out a sword that severed 'a ball of wool floating on water.' But neither would this suffice him; he returned to his smithy, and by means known only to himself, produced, in the course of seven weeks, a third and final edition of Mimung, which split asunder a whole floating pack of wool. The comparative trial now took place forthwith. Amilias, cased in his impenetrable coat of mail, sat down on a bench, in presence of assembled thousands, and bade Mimer strike him. Mimer fetched of course his best blow, on which Amilias observed, that there was a strange feeling of cold iron in his inwards. 'Shake thyself,' said Mimer; the luckless wight did so, and fell in two

him. To which last acquisitions adding his previously acquired Invulnerability, and his natural dignities as Prince of Netherland, he might well show himself before the foremost at Worms or elsewhere; and attempt any the highest adventure that fortune could cut out for him. However, his subsequent history belongs all to the *Nibelungen Song;* at which fair garden of poesy we are now, through all these shaggy wildernesses and enchanted woods, finally arrived

Apart from its antiquarian value, and not only as by far the finest monument of old German art; but intrinsically, and as a mere detached composition, this *Nibelungen* has an excellence that cannot but surprise us. With little preparation, any reader of poetry, even in these days, might find it interesting. It is not without a certain Unity of interest and purport, an internal coherence and completeness; it is a Whole, and some spirit of Music informs it: these are the highest characteristics of a true Poem. Considering farther what intellectual environment we now find it in, it is doubly to be prized and wondered at; for it differs from those *Hero-books*, as molten or carved metal does from rude agglomerated ore; almost as some Shakspeare from his fellow Dramatists, whose *Tamburlaines* and *Island Princesses*, themselves not destitute of merit, first show us clearly in what pure loftiness and loneliness the *Hamlets* and *Tempests* reign.

The unknown Singer of the *Nibelungen*, though no Shakspeare, must have had a deep poetic soul; wherein things discontinuous and inanimate shaped themselves together into life, and the Universe with its wondrous purport stood significantly imaged; overarching, as with heavenly firmaments and eternal harmonies, the little scene where men strut and fret their hour. His Poem, unlike so many old and new pretenders to that name, has a basis and organic structure, a beginning, middle and end; there is one great principle and idea set forth in it, round which all its multifarious parts combine in living union. Remarkable it is, moreover, how along with this essence and primary condition of all poetic virtue, the minor external virtues of what we call Taste and so forth, are, as it were, presupposed; and the living soul of Poetry being there, its body

halves, being cleft sheer through from collar to haunch, never more to swing hammer in this world. See *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*, p. 31.

of incidents, its garment of language, come of their own accord. So too in the case of Shakspeare: his feeling of propriety, as compared with that of the Marlowes and Fletchers, his quick sure sense of what is fit and unfit, either in act or word, might astonish us, had he no other superiority. But true Inspiration, as it may well do, includes that same Taste, or rather a far higher and heartfelt Taste, of which that other 'elegant' species is but an ineffectual, irrational apery: let us see the herald Mercury actually descend from his Heaven, and the bright wings, and the graceful movement of these, will not be wanting.

With an instinctive art, far different from acquired artifice, this Poet of the *Nibelungen*, working in the same province with his contemporaries of the *Heldenbuch*, on the same material of tradition, has, in a wonderful degree, possessed himself of what these could only strive after; and with his 'clear feeling of fictitious truth,' avoided as false the errors and monstrous perplexities in which they vainly struggled. He is of another species than they; in language, in purity and depth of feeling, in fineness of invention, stands quite apart from them.

The language of the *Heldenbuch*, as we saw above, was a feeble half-articulate child's-speech, the metre nothing better than a miserable doggerel; whereas here in the old Frankish (*Oberdeutsch*) dialect of the *Nibelungen*, we have a clear decisive utterance, and in a real system of verse, not without essential regularity, great liveliness, and now and then even harmony of rhythm Doubtless we must often call it a diffuse diluted utterance; at the same time it is genuine, with a certain antique garrulous heartiness, and has a rhythm in the thoughts as well as the words. The simplicity is never silly: even in that perpetual recurrence of epithets, sometimes of rhymes, as where two words, for instance *lîp* (body, life, *leib*) and *wîp* (woman, wife, *weib*) are indissolubly wedded together, and the one never shows itself without the other following,—there is something which reminds us not so much of poverty, as of trustfulness and child-like innocence. Indeed a strange charm lies in those old tones, where, in gay dancing melodies, the sternest tidings are sung to us; and deep floods of Sadness and Strife play lightly in little curling billows, like seas in summer. It is as a meek smile, in whose still, thoughtful depths a whole infinitude of patience, and love, and heroic strength lie revealed. But in other cases too, we have seen this outward sport and inward earnestness offer grateful contrast, and cunning excitement; for example, in Tasso; of whom, though otherwise different enough, this

old Northern Singer has more than once reminded us. There too, as here, we have a dark solemn meaning in light guise: deeds of high temper, harsh self-denial, daring and death, stand embodied in that soft, quick-flowing, joyfully-modulated verse. Nay farther, as if the implement, much more than we might fancy, had influenced the work done, these two Poems, could we trust our individual feeling, have in one respect the same poetical result for us: in the *Nibelungen* as in the *Gerusalemme*, the persons and their story are indeed brought vividly before us, yet not near and palpably present; it is rather as if we looked on that scene through an inverted telescope, whereby the whole was carried far away into the distance, the life-large figures compressed into brilliant miniatures, so clear, so real, yet tiny, elf-like and beautified as well as lessened, their colours being now closer and brighter, the shadows and trivial features no longer visible. This, as we partly apprehend, comes of *singing* Epic Poems; most part of which only pretend to be sung. Tasso's rich melody still lives among the Italian people; the *Nibelungen* also is what it professes to be, a *Song*.

No less striking than the verse and language is the quality of the invention manifested here. Of the Fable, or narrative material of the *Nibelungen*, we should say that it had high, almost the highest merit; so daintily yet firmly is it put together; with such felicitous selection of the beautiful, the essential, and no less felicitous rejection of whatever was unbeautiful or even extraneous. The reader is no longer afflicted with that chaotic brood of Fire-drakes, Giants, and malicious turbaned Turks, so fatally rife in the *Heldenbuch:* all this is swept away, or only hovers in faint shadows afar off; and free field is open for legitimate perennial interests. Yet neither is the *Nibelungen* without its wonders; for it is poetry and not prose; here too, a supernatural world encompasses the natural, and, though at rare intervals and in calm manner, reveals itself there. It is truly wonderful, with what skill our simple untaught Poet deals with the marvellous; admitting it without reluctance or criticism, yet precisely in the degree and shape that will best avail him. Here, if in no other respect, we should say that he has a decided superiority to Homer himself. The whole story of the *Nibelungen* is fateful, mysterious, guided on by unseen influences; yet the actual marvels are few, and done in the far distance; those Dwarfs, and Cloaks of Darkness, and charmed Treasure-caves, are heard of rather than beheld, the tidings of them seem to issue from unknown space. Vain were it to

inquire where that Nibelungen-land specially is: its very name is *Nebel-land* or *Nifl-land*, the land of Darkness, of Invisibility. The 'Nibelungen Heroes' that muster in thousands and tens of thousands, though they march to the Rhine or Danube, and we see their strong limbs and shining armour, we could almost fancy to be children of the air. Far beyond the firm horizon, that wonder-bearing region swims on the infinite waters; unseen by bodily eye, or at most discerned as a faint streak, hanging in the blue depths, uncertain whether island or cloud. And thus the *Nibelungen Song*, though based on the bottomless foundations of Spirit, and not unvisited of skyey messengers, is a real, rounded, habitable Earth, where we find firm footing, and the wondrous and the common live amicably together. Perhaps it would be difficult to find any Poet of ancient or modern times, who in this trying problem has steered his way with greater delicacy and success.

To any of our readers who may have personally studied the *Nibelungen*, these high praises of ours will not seem exaggerated: the rest, who are the vast majority, must endeavour to accept them with some degree of faith, at least of curiosity; to vindicate, and judicially substantiate them would far exceed our present opportunities. Nay in any case, the criticism, the alleged Characteristics of a Poem are so many Theorems, which are indeed enunciated, truly or falsely, but the Demonstration of which must be sought for in the reader's own study and experience. Nearly all that can be attempted here, is some hasty epitome of the mere Narrative; no substantial image of the work, but a feeble outline and shadow. To which task, as the personages and their environment have already been in some degree illustrated, we can now proceed without obstacle.

The *Nibelungen* has been called the Northern Epos; yet it has, in great part, a Dramatic character: those thirty-nine *Aventiuren* (Adventures), which it consists of, might be so many scenes in a Tragedy. The catastrophe is dimly prophesied from the beginning; and, at every fresh step, rises more and more clearly into view. A shadow of coming Fate, as it were, a low inarticulate voice of Doom falls, from the first, out of that charmed Nibelungen-land: the discord of two women is as a little spark of evil passion, which ere long enlarges itself into a crime; foul murder is done; and now the Sin rolls on like a devouring fire, till the guilty and the innocent are alike encircled with it, and a whole land is ashes, and a whole race is swept away.

Uns ist in alten mæren Wunders vil geseit,
Von helden lobebæren Von grozer chuonheit;
Von vrouden und' hoch-geziten, Von weinen und von chlagen,
Von chuner rechen striten, Muget ir nu wunder hören sagen.

We find in ancient story Wonders many told,
Of heroes in great glory With spirit free and bold;
Of joyances and high-tides, Of weeping and of woe,
Of noble Recken striving, Mote ye now wonders know.

This is the brief artless Proem; and the promise contained in it proceeds directly towards fulfilment. In the very second stanza we learn:

Es wühs in Burgonden Ein vil edel magedin,
Das in allen landen Niht schoners mohte sin;
Chriemhilt was si geheien, Si wart ein schone wip;
Darumbe müsen degene Vil verliesen den lip.

A right noble maiden Did grow in Burgundy,
That in all lands of earth Nought fairer mote there be;
Chriemhild of Worms she hight, She was a fairest *wife;*
For the which must warriors A many lose their life.*

Chriemhild, this world's-wonder, a king's daughter and king's sister, and no less coy and proud than fair, dreams one night that 'she had petted a falcon, strong, beautiful and wild; which two eagles snatched away from her: this she was forced to see; greater sorrow felt she never in the world.' Her mother, Ute, to whom she relates the vision, soon redes it for her; the falcon is a noble husband, whom, God keep him, she must suddenly

* This is the first of a thousand instances in which the two inseparables, *wip* and *lip*, or in modern tongue *weib* and *leib*, as mentioned above, appear together. From these two opening stanzas of the *Nibelungen Lied*, in its purest form, the reader may obtain some idea of the versification; it runs on in more or less regular Alexandrines, with a cæsural pause in each, where the capital letter occurs; indeed, the lines seem originally to have been divided into two at that point, for sometimes, as in Stanza First, the middle words (*mæren, lobebæren; geziten, striten*) also rhyme; but this is rather a rare case. The word *rechen* or *recken*, used in the First Stanza, is the constant designation for bold fighters, and has the same root with *rich* (thus in old French, *hommes riches;* in Spanish, *ricos hombres*), which last is here also synonymous with *powerful*, and is applied to kings, and even to the Almighty, *Got dem richen.*

lose. Chriemhild declares warmly for the single state; as, indeed, living there at the Court of Worms, with her brothers, Gunther, Gernot, Geiselher, 'three kings noble and rich,' in such pomp and renown, the pride of Burgunden-land and Earth, she might readily enough have changed for the worse. However, dame Ute bids her not be too emphatical; for 'if ever she have heartfelt joy in life, it will be from man's love, and she shall be a fair wife (*wîp*), when God sends her a right worthy Ritter's *lîp*.' Chriemhild is more in earnest than maidens usually are when they talk thus; it appears, she guarded against love, 'for many a lief-long day;' nevertheless, she too must yield to destiny. 'Honourably she was to become a most noble Ritter's wife.' 'This,' adds the old Singer, 'was that same falcon she dreamed of · how sorely she since revenged him on her nearest kindred! For that one death died full many a mother's son.'

It may be observed, that the Poet here, and at all times, shows a marked partiality for Chriemhild; ever striving, unlike his fellow-singers, to magnify her worth, her faithfulness and loveliness; and softening, as much as may be, whatever makes against her. No less a favourite with him is Siegfried, the prompt, gay, peaceably fearless hero; to whom, in the Second *Aventiure*, we are here suddenly introduced, at Santen (Xanten), the Court of Netherland; whither, to his glad parents, after achievements (to us partially known) 'of which one might sing and tell forever,' that noble prince has returned. Much as he has done and conquered, he is but just arrived at man's years: it is on occasion of this joyful event that a high-tide (*hochgezît*) is now held there, with infinite joustings, minstrelsy, largesses and other chivalrous doings, all which is sung with utmost heartiness. The old King Siegemund offers to resign his crown to him; but Siegfried has other game a-field: the unparalleled beauty of Chriemhild has reached his ear and his fancy; and now he will to Worms and woo her, at least 'see how it stands with her.' Fruitless is it for Siegemund and the mother Siegelinde to represent the perils of that enterprise, the pride of those Burgundian Gunthers and Gernots, the fierce temper of their uncle Hagen; Siegfried is as obstinate as young men are in these cases, and can hear no counsel. Nay he will not accept the much more liberal proposition, to take an army with him, and conquer the country, if it must be so; he will ride forth, like himself, with twelve champions only, and so defy the future. Whereupon, the old people finding that there is no other course,

proceed to make him clothes;*—at least, the good queen with 'her fair women sitting night and day,' and sewing, does so, the father furnishing noblest battle and riding gear;—and so dismiss him with many blessings and lamentations. 'For him wept sore the king and his *wife*, but he comforted both their bodies (*lip*); he said, "Ye must not weep, for my body ever shall ye be without care."'

Sad was it to the Recken, Stood weeping many a maid;
I ween their heart had them The tidings true foresaid,
That of their friends so many Death thereby should find;
Cause had they of lamenting, Such boding in their mind.

Nevertheless, on the seventh morning, that adventurous company 'ride up the sand,' on the Rhinebeach, to Worms; in high temper, in dress and trappings, aspect and bearing more than kingly.

Siegfried's reception at King Gunther's court, and his brave sayings and doings there for some time, we must omit. One fine trait of his chivalrous delicacy it is that, for a whole year, he never hints at his errand; never once sees or speaks of Chriemhild, whom, nevertheless, he is longing day and night to meet. She, on her side, has often through her lattices noticed the gallant stranger, victorious in all tiltings and knightly exercises; whereby it would seem, in spite of her rigorous predeterminations, some kindness for him is already gliding in. Meanwhile, mighty wars and threats of invasion arise, and Siegfried does the state good service. Returning victorious, both as general and soldier, from Hessen (Hessia), where, by help of his own courage and the sword Balmung, he has captured a Danish king, and utterly discomfited a Saxon one; he can now show himself before Chriemhild without other blushes than those of timid love. Nay the maiden has herself inquired pointedly of the messengers, touching his exploits; and 'her fair face grew rose-red when she heard them.' A gay High-tide, by way of triumph, is appointed; several kings, and two-and-thirty princes, and knights enough with 'gold-red saddles,' come to joust; and better than whole infinities of kings and princes with their saddles, the fair Chriemhild herself, under guidance of her mother, chiefly too in honour of the

* This is a never-failing preparative for all expeditions, and always specified and insisted on with a simple, loving, almost female impressiveness.

victor, is to grace that sport. 'Ute the full rich' fails not to set her needle-women to work, and 'clothes of price are taken from their presses,' for the love of her child, 'wherewith to deck many women and maids.' And now, 'on the Whitsun-morning,' all is ready, and glorious as heart could desire it; brave Ritters, 'five thousand or more,' all glancing in the lists; but grander still, Chriemhild herself is advancing beside her mother, with a hundred body-guards, all sword-in-hand, and many a noble maid 'wearing rich raiment,' in her train!

'Now issued forth the lovely one (*minnechliche*), as the red morning doth from troubled clouds; much care fled away from him who bore her in his heart, and long had done; he saw the lovely one stand in her beauty.

'There glanced from her garments full many precious stones, her rose-red colour shone full lovely: try what he might, each man must confess that in this world he had not seen aught so fair.

'Like as the light moon stands before the stars, and its sheen so clear goes over the clouds, even so stood she now before many fair women; whereat cheered was the mind of the hero.

'The rich chamberlains you saw go before her, the high-spirited Recken would not forbear, but pressed on where they saw the lovely maiden. Siegfried the lord was both glad and sad.

'He thought in his mind, How could this be that I should woo thee? That was a foolish dream; yet must I forever be a stranger, I were rather (*sanfter*, softer) dead. He became, from these thoughts, in quick changes, pale and red.

'Thus stood so lovely the child of Siegelinde, as if he were limned on parchment by a master's art; for all granted that hero so beautiful they had never seen.'

In this passage, which we have rendered, from the Fifth *Aventiure*, into the closest prose, it is to be remarked, among other singularities, that there are two similes: in which figure of speech our old Singer deals very sparingly. The first, that comparison of Chriemhild to the moon among stars with its sheen going over the clouds, has now for many centuries had little novelty or merit: but the second, that of Siegfried to a Figure in some illuminated Manuscript, is graceful in itself; and unspeakably so to antiquaries, seldom honoured, in their Black-letter stubbing and grubbing, with such a poetic windfall!

A prince and a princess of this quality are clearly made for one another. Nay, on the motion of young Herr Gernot, fair Chriemhild is bid specially to salute Siegfried, she who

had never before saluted man; which unparalleled grace the lovely one, in all courtliness, openly does him. "Be welcome," said she, "Herr Siegfried, a noble Ritter good;" from which salute, for this seems to have been all, 'much raised was his mind.' He bowed with graceful reverence, as his manner was with women; she took him by the hand, and with fond stolen glances they looked at each other. Whether in that ceremonial joining of hands there might not be some soft, slight pressure, of far deeper import, is what our Singer will not take upon him to say; however, he thinks the affirmative more probable. Henceforth, in that bright May weather, the two were seen constantly together: nothing but felicity around and before them.—In these days, truly, it must have been that the famous Prize-fight, with Dietrich of Bern and his Eleven Lombardy champions, took place, little to the profit of the two Lovers; were it not rather that the whole of that Rose-garden transaction, as given in the *Heldenbuch*, might be falsified and even imaginary; for no mention or hint of it occurs here. War or battle is not heard of; Siegfried the peerless walks wooingly by the side of Chriemhild the peerless; matters, it is evident, are in the best possible course.

But now comes a new side-wind, which, however, in the long-run also forwards the voyage. Tidings, namely, reached over the Rhine, not so surprising we might hope, 'that there was many a fair maiden;' whereupon Gunther the King 'thought with himself to win one of them.' It was an honest purpose in King Gunther, only his voice was not the discreetest. For no fair maiden will content him but Queen Brunhild, a lady who rules in *Isenland*, far over sea, famed indeed for her beauty, yet no less so for her caprices. Fables we have met with of this Brunhild being properly a *Valkyr*, or Scandinavian Houri, such as were wont to lead old northern warriors from their last battle-field into Valhalla; and that her castle of *Isenstein* stood amidst a lake of fire: but this, as we said, is fable and groundless calumny, of which there is not so much as notice taken here. Brunhild, it is plain enough, was a flesh-and-blood maiden, glorious in look and faculty, only with some preternatural talents given her, and the strangest wayward habits. It appears, for example, that any suitor proposing for her has this brief condition to proceed upon: he must try the adorable in the three several games of hurling the Spear (at one another), Leaping, and throwing the Stone: if victorious, he gains her hand; if vanquished, he loses his own head;

which latter issue, such is the fair Amazon's strength, frequent fatal experiment has shown to be the only probable one.

Siegfried, who knows something of Brunhild and her ways, votes clearly against the whole enterprise; however, Gunther has once for all got the whim in him, and must see it out. The prudent Hagen von Troneg, uncle to love-sick Gunther, and ever true to him, then advises that Siegfried be requested to take part in the adventure; to which request Siegfried readily accedes on one condition: that, should they prove fortunate, he himself is to have Chriemhild to wife when they return. This readily settled, he now takes charge of the business, and throws a little light on it for the others. They must lead no army thither; only two, Hagen and Dankwart, besides the king and himself, shall go. The grand subject of *waete** (clothes) is next hinted at, and in general terms elucidated; whereupon a solemn consultation with Chriemhild ensues; and a great cutting-out, on her part, of white silk from Araby, of green silk from Zazemang, of strange fish-skins covered with morocco silk; a great sewing thereof for seven weeks, on the part of her maids; lastly, a fitting-on of the three suits by each hero, for each had three; and heartiest thanks in return, seeing all fitted perfectly, and was of grace and price unutterable. What is still more to the point, Siegfried takes his Cloak of Darkness with him, fancying he may need it there. The good old Singer, who has hitherto alluded only in the faintest way to Siegfried's prior adventures and miraculous possessions, introduces this of the *Tarnkappe* with great frankness and simplicity. 'Of wild dwarfs (*getwergen*),' says he, 'I have heard tell, they are in hollow mountains, and for defence wear somewhat called *Tarnkappe*, of wondrous sort;' the qualities of which garment, that it renders invisible, and gives twelve men's strength, are already known to us.

The voyage to Isenstein, Siegfried steering the ship thither, is happily accomplished in twenty days. Gunther admires to a high degree the fine masonry of the place; as indeed he well might, there being some eighty-six towers, three immense palaces and one immense hall, the whole built of 'marble green as grass;' farther he sees many fair women looking from the windows down on the bark, and thinks the loveliest is she in the snow-white dress; which, Siegfried informs him, is a worthy

* Hence our English *weeds*, and Scotch *wad* (pledge); and, say the etymologists, *wadding*, and even *wedding*.

choice; the snow-white maiden being no other than Brunhild. It is also to be kept in mind that Siegfried, for reasons known best to himself, had previously stipulated that, though a free king, they should all treat him as vassal of Gunther, for whom accordingly he holds the stirrup, as they mount on the beach; thereby giving rise to a misconception, which in the end led to saddest consequences.

Queen Brunhild, who had called back her maidens from the windows, being a strict disciplinarian, and retired into the interior of her green marble Isenstein, to dress still better, now inquires of some attendant, Who these strangers of such lordly aspect are, and what brings them? The attendant professes himself at a loss to say; one of them looks like Siegfried, the other is evidently by his port a noble king. His notice of Von Troneg Hagen is peculiarly vivid:

> The third of those companions He is of aspect stern,
> And yet with lovely body, Rich queen, as ye might discern;
> From those *his rapid glances*, For the eyes nought rest in him,
> Meseems this foreign Recke Is of temper fierce and grim.

This is one of those little graphic touches, scattered all over our Poem, which do more for picturing out an object, especially a man, than whole pages of enumeration and mensuration. Never after do we hear of this stout indomitable Hagen, in all the wild deeds and sufferings he passes through, but those *swinden blicken* of his come before us, with the restless, deep, dauntless spirit that looks through them.

Brunhild's reception of Siegfried is not without tartness; which, however, he, with polished courtesy and the nimblest address, ever at his command, softens down, or hurries over: he is here, without will of his own, and so forth, only as attendant on his master, the renowned King Gunther, who comes to sue for her hand, as the summit and keystone of all earthly blessings. Brunhild, who had determined on fighting Siegfried himself, if so he willed it, makes small account of this King Gunther or his prowess; and instantly clears the ground, and equips her for battle. The royal wooer must have looked a little blank when he saw a shield brought in for his fair one's handling, 'three spans thick with gold and iron,' which four chamberlains could hardly bear, and a spear or javelin she meant to shoot or hurl, which was a burden for three. Hagen, in angry apprehension for his king and nephew, exclaims that

they shall all lose their life (*lip*), and that she is the *tiuvels wip*, or Devil's wife. Nevertheless Siegfried is already there in his Cloak of Darkness, twelve men strong, and privily whispers in the ear of royalty to be of comfort; takes the shield to himself, Gunther only affecting to hold it, and so fronts the edge of battle. Brunhild performs prodigies of spear-hurling, of leaping, and stone-pitching; but Gunther, or rather Siegfried, 'who does the work, he only acting the gestures,' nay who even snatches him up into the air, and leaps carrying him,—gains a decided victory, and the lovely Amazon must own with surprise and shame that she is fairly won. Siegfried presently appears without *Tarnkappe*, and asks with a grave face, When the games, then, are to begin?

So far well; yet somewhat still remains to be done. Brunhild will not sail for Worms, to be wedded, till she have assembled a fit train of warriors: wherein the Burgundians, being here without retinue, see symptoms or possibilities of mischief. The deft Siegfried, ablest of men, again knows a resource. In his *Tarnkappe* he steps on board the bark, which seen from the shore, appears to drift-off of its own accord; and therein, stoutly steering towards *Nibelungen-land*, he reaches that mysterious country and the mountain where his Hoard lies, before the second morning; finds Dwarf Alberich and all his giant sentinels at their post, and faithful almost to the death; these soon rouse him thirty thousand Nibelungen Recken, from whom he has only to choose one thousand of the best; equip them splendidly enough; and therewith return to Gunther, simply as if they were that sovereign's own body-guard, that had been delayed a little by stress of weather.

The final arrival at Worms; the bridal feasts, for there are two, Siegfried also receiving his reward; and the joyance and splendour of man and maid, at this lordliest of high-tides; and the joustings, greater than those at Aspramont or Montauban,—every reader can fancy for himself. Remarkable only is the evil eye with which Queen Brunhild still continues to regard the noble Siegfried. She cannot understand how Gunther, the Landlord of the Rhine,* should have bestowed his sister on a vassal: the assurance that Siegfried also is a prince and heir-apparent, the prince namely of Netherland, and little inferior to Burgundian majesty itself, yields no complete

* *Der Wirt von Rine:* singular enough, the word *Wirth*, often applied to royalty in that old dialect, is now also the title of innkeepers. To such base uses may we come.

satisfaction; and Brunhild hints plainly that, unless the truth be told her, unpleasant consequences may follow. Thus is there ever a ravelled thread in the web of life! But for this little cloud of spleen, these bridal feasts had been all bright and balmy as the month of June. Unluckily too, the cloud is an electric one; spreads itself in time into a general earthquake; nay that very night becomes a thunder-storm, or tornado, unparalleled we may hope in the annals of connubial happiness.

The Singer of the *Nibelungen*, unlike the author of *Roderick Random*, cares little for intermeddling with the 'chaste mysteries of Hymen.' Could we, in the corrupt ambiguous modern tongue, hope to exhibit any shadow of the old simple, true-hearted, merely historical spirit, with which, in perfect purity of soul, he describes things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme,—we could a tale unfold! Suffice it to say, King Gunther, Landlord of the Rhine, falling sheer down from the third heaven of hope, finds his spouse the most athletic and intractable of women; and himself, at the close of the adventure, nowise encircled in her arms, but tied hard and fast, hand and foot, in her girdle, and hung thereby, at considerable elevation, on a nail in the wall. Let any reader of sensibility figure the emotions of the royal breast, there as he vibrates suspended on his peg, and his inexorable bride sleeping sound in her bed below! Towards morning he capitulates: engaging to observe the prescribed line of conduct with utmost strictness. so he may but avoid becoming a laughing-stock to all men.

No wonder the dread king looked rather grave next morning, and received the congratulations of mankind in a cold manner. He confesses to Siegfried, who partly suspects how it may be, that he has brought the 'evil devil' home to his house in the shape of wife, whereby he is wretched enough. However, there are remedies for all things but death. The ever-serviceable Siegfried undertakes even here to make the crooked straight. What may not an honest friend with Tarnkappe and twelve men's strength perform? Proud Brunhild, next night, after a fierce contest, owns herself again vanquished; Gunther is there to reap the fruits of another's victory; the noble Siegfried withdraws, taking nothing with him but the luxury of doing good, and the proud queen's Ring and Girdle gained from her in that struggle; which small trophies he, with the last infirmity of a noble mind, presents to his own fond wife, little dreaming that they would one day cost him and her, and all of them, so dear. Such readers as take any interest in poor Gunther will be

gratified to learn, that from this hour Brunhild's preternatural faculties quite left her, being all dependent on her maidhood; so that any more spear-hurling, or other the like extraordinary work, is not to be apprehended from her.

If we add, that Siegfried formally made over to his dear Chriemhild the Nibelungen Hoard, by way of *Morgengabe* (or, as we may say, Jointure); and the high-tide, though not the honeymoon being past, returned to Netherland with his spouse, to be welcomed there with infinite rejoicings,—we have gone through as it were the First Act of this Tragedy; and may here pause to look round us for a moment. The main characters are now introduced on the scene, the relations that bind them together are dimly sketched out: there is the prompt, cheerfully heroic, invulnerable and invincible Siegfried, now happiest of men; the high Chriemhild, fitly-mated, and if a moon, revolving glorious round her sun, or *Friedel* (joy and darling); not without pride and female aspirings, yet not prouder than one so gifted and placed is pardonable for being. On the other hand, we have King Gunther, or rather let us say king's-mantle Gunther, for never except in that one enterprise of courting Brunhild, in which too, without help, he would have cut so poor a figure, does the worthy sovereign show will of his own, or character other than that of good potter's clay; farther, the suspicious, forecasting, yet stout and reckless Hagen, him with the *rapid glances*, and these turned not too kindly on Siegfried, whose prowess he has used yet dreads, whose Nibelungen Hoard he perhaps already covets; lastly, the rigorous and vigorous Brunhild, of whom also more is to be feared than hoped. Considering the fierce nature of these now mingled ingredients; and how, except perhaps in the case of Gunther, there is no menstruum of placid stupidity to soften them; except in Siegfried, no element of heroic truth to master them and bind them together,—unquiet fermentation may readily be apprehended.

Meanwhile, for a season all is peace and sunshine. Siegfried reigns in Netherland, of which his father has surrendered him the crown; Chriemhild brings him a son, whom in honour of the uncle he christens Gunther, which courtesy the uncle and Brunhild repay in kind. The Nibelungen Hoard is still open and inexhaustible; Dwarf Alberich and all the Recken there still loyal; outward relations friendly, internal supremely prosperous: these are halcyon days. But, alas, they cannot last. Queen Brunhild, retaining with true female tenacity her first

notion, right or wrong, reflects one day that Siegfried, who is and shall be nothing but her husband's vassal, has for a long while paid him no service; and, determined on a remedy, manages that Siegfried and his queen shall be invited to a high-tide at Worms, where opportunity may chance for enforcing that claim. Thither accordingly, after ten years' absence, we find these illustrious guests returning; Siegfried escorted by a thousand Nibelungen Ritters, and farther by his father Siegemund who leads a train of Netherlanders. Here for eleven days, amid infinite joustings, there is a true heaven-on-earth: but the apple of discord is already lying in the knightly ring, and two Women, the proudest and keenest-tempered of the world, simultaneously stoop to lift it. *Aventiure* Fourteenth is entitled 'How the two queens rated one another.' Never was courtlier Billingsgate uttered, or which came more directly home to the business and bosoms of women. The subject is that old story of Precedence, which indeed, from the time of Cain and Abel downwards, has wrought such effusion of blood and bile both among men and women; lying at the bottom of all armaments and battle-fields, whether Blenheims and Waterloos, or only plate-displays, and tongue-and-eye skirmishes, in the circle of domestic Tea: nay, the very animals have it; and horses, were they but the miserablest Shelties and Welsh ponies, will not graze together till it has been ascertained, by clear fight, who is master of whom, and a proper drawing-room etiquette established.

Brunhild and Chriemhild take to arguing about the merits of their husbands: the latter, fondly expatiating on the preëminence of her *Friedel*, how he walks 'like the moon among stars' before all other men, is reminded by her sister that one man at least must be excepted, the mighty King Gunther of Worms, to whom by his own confession long ago at Isenstein, he is vassal and servant. Chriemhild will sooner admit that clay is above sunbeams, than any such proposition; which therefore she, in all politeness, requests of her sister never more to touch upon while she lives. The result may be foreseen: rejoinder follows reply, statement grows assertion; flint-sparks have fallen on the dry flax, which from smoke bursts into conflagration. The two queens part in hottest, though still clear-flaming anger. Not, however, to let their anger burn out, but only to feed it with more solid fuel. Chriemhild dresses her forty maids in finer than royal apparel; orders out all her husband's Recken; and so attended, walks foremost to the Minster, where mass is

to be said; thus practically asserting that she is not only a true queen, but the worthier of the two. Brunhild, quite outdone in splendour, and enraged beyond all patience, overtakes her at the door of the Minster, with peremptory order to stop: "before king's wife shall vassal's never go."

Then said the fair Chriemhild, Right angry was her mood:
"Couldest thou but hold thy peace, It were surely for thy good;
Thyself hast all polluted With shame thy fair bodye;
How can a Concubine By right a King's wife be?"

"Whom hast thou Concubined?" The King's wife quickly spake;
"That do I thee," said Chriemhild; "For thy pride and vaunting's sake;
Who first had thy fair body Was Siegfried my beloved Man;
My Brother it was not That thy maidhood from thee wan."

In proof of which outrageous saying, she produces that Ring and Girdle; the innocent conquest of which, as we well know, had a far other origin. Brunhild burst into tears; 'sadder day she never saw.' Nay, perhaps a new light now rose on her over much that had been dark in her late history; 'she rued full sore that ever she was born.'

Here, then, is the black injury, which only blood will wash away. The evil fiend has begun his work; and the issue of it lies beyond man's control. Siegfried may protest his innocence of that calumny, and chastise his indiscreet spouse for uttering it even in the heat of anger: the female heart is wounded beyond healing; the old springs of bitterness against this hero unite into a fell flood of hate; while he sees the sunlight, she cannot know a joyful hour. Vengeance is soon offered her: Hagen, who lives only for his prince, undertakes this bad service; by treacherous professions of attachment, and anxiety to guard Siegfried's life, he gains from Chriemhild the secret of his vulnerability; Siegfried is carried out to hunt; and in the hour of frankest gaiety is stabbed through the fatal spot; and, felling the murderer to the ground, dies upbraiding his false kindred, yet, with a touching simplicity, recommending his child and wife to their protection. '"Let her feel that she is your sister; was there ever virtue in princes, be true to her: for me my Father and my men shall long wait." The flowers all round were wetted with blood, then he struggled with death; not long did he this, the weapon cut him too keen; so he could speak nought more, the Recke bold and noble.'

At this point, we might say, ends the Third Act of our Tragedy; the whole story henceforth takes a darker character: it is as if a tone of sorrow and fateful boding became more and more audible in its free light music. Evil has produced new evil in fatal augmentation: injury is abolished; but in its stead there is guilt and despair. Chriemhild, an hour ago so rich, is now robbed of all: her grief is boundless as her love has been. No glad thought can ever more dwell in her; darkness, utter night has come over her, as she looked into the red of morning. The spoiler too walks abroad unpunished; the bleeding corpse witnesses against Hagen, nay he himself cares not to hide the deed. But who is there to avenge the friendless? Siegfried's Father has returned in haste to his own land; Chriemhild is now alone on the earth, her husband's grave is all that remains to her; there only can she sit, as if waiting at the threshold of her own dark home; and in prayers and tears pour out the sorrow and love that have no end. Still farther injuries are heaped on her: by advice of the crafty Hagen, Gunther, who had not planned the murder, yet permitted and witnessed it, now comes with whining professions of repentance and good-will; persuades her to send for the Nibelungen Hoard to Worms; where no sooner is it arrived, than Hagen and the rest forcibly take it from her; and her last trust in affection or truth from mortal is rudely cut away. Bent to the earth, she weeps only for her lost Siegfried, knows no comfort, but will weep forever.

One lurid gleam of hope, after long years of darkness, breaks in on her, in the prospect of revenge. King Etzel sends from his far country to solicit her hand: the embassy she hears at first, as a woman of ice might do; the good Rudiger, Etzel's spokesman, pleads in vain that his king is the richest of all earthly kings; that he is so lonely 'since Frau Helke died;' that though a heathen, he has Christians about him, and may one day be converted: till at length, when he hints distantly at the power of Etzel to avenge her injuries, she on a sudden becomes all attention. Hagen, foreseeing such possibilities, protests against the match; but is overruled: Chriemhild departs with Rudiger for the land of the Huns; taking cold leave of her relations; only two of whom, her brothers Gernot and Giselher, innocent of that murder, does she admit near her as convoy to the Donau.

The Nibelungen Hoard has hitherto been fatal to all its possessors; to the two sons of Nibelung; to Siegfried its conqueror: neither does the Burgundian Royal House fare

better with it. Already, discords threatening to arise, Hagen sees prudent to sink it in the Rhine; first taking oath of Gunther and his brothers, that none of them shall reveal the hiding-place, while any of the rest is alive. But the curse that clave to it could not be sunk there. The Nibelungen-land is now theirs: they themselves are henceforth called Nibelungen; and this history of their fate is the Nibelungen Song, or *Nibelungen Noth* (Nibelungen's Need, extreme Need, or final wreck and abolition).

The Fifth Act of our strange eventful history now draws on. Chriemhild has a kind husband, of hospitable disposition, who troubles himself little about her secret feelings and intents. With his permission, she sends two minstrels, inviting the Burgundian Court to a high-tide at Etzel's: she has charged the messengers to say that she is happy, and to bring all Gunther's champions with them. Her eye was on Hagen, but she could not single him from the rest. After seven days' deliberation, Gunther answers that he will come. Hagen has loudly dissuaded the journey, but again been overruled. 'It is his fate,' says a commentator, 'like Cassandra's, ever to foresee the evil, and ever to be disregarded. He himself shut his ear against the inward voice; and now his warnings are uttered to the deaf.' He argues long, but in vain: nay young Gernot hints at last that this aversion originates in personal fear:

> Then spake Von Troneg Hagen: "Nowise is it through fear;
> So you command it, Heroes, Then up, gird on your gear;
> I ride with you the foremost Into King Etzel's land."
> Since then full many a helm Was shivered by his hand.

Frau Ute's dreams and omens are now unavailing with him; "whoso heedeth dreams," said Hagen, "of the right story wotteth not:" he has computed the worst issue, and defied it.

Many a little touch of pathos, and even solemn beauty lies carelessly scattered in these rhymes, had we space to exhibit such here. As specimen of a strange, winding, diffuse, yet innocently graceful style of narrative, we had translated some considerable portion of this Twenty-fifth *Aventiure*, 'How the Nibelungen marched (fared) to the Huns,' into verses as literal as might be; which now, alas, look mournfully different from the original; almost like Scriblerus's shield when the barbarian housemaid had scoured it! Nevertheless, to do for the reader what we can, let somewhat of that modernised ware, such as it is, be set before him. The brave Nibelungen are on

the eve of departure; and about ferrying over the Rhine: and here it may be noted that Worms,* with our old Singer, lies not in its true position, but at some distance from the river; a proof at least that he was never there, and probably sang and lived in some very distant region:

The boats were floating ready, And many men there were;
What clothes of price they had They took and stow'd them there,
Was never a rest from toiling Until the eventide,
Then they took the flood right gaily, Would longer not abide.

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* This City of Worms, had we a right imagination, ought to be as venerable to us Moderns, as any Thebes or Troy was to the Ancients. Whether founded by the Gods or not, it is of quite unknown antiquity, and has witnessed the most wonderful things. Within authentic times, the Romans were here; and if tradition may be credited, Attila also; it was the seat of the Austrasian kings; the frequent residence of Charlemagne himself; innumerable Festivals, High-tides, Tournaments and Imperial Diets were held in it, of which latter, one at least, that where Luther appeared in 1521, will be forever remembered by all mankind. Nor is Worms more famous in history than, as indeed we may see here, it is in romance; whereof many monuments and vestiges remain to *this day*. 'A pleasant meadow there,' says Von der Hagen, 'is still called Chriemhild's *Rosengarten*. The name *Worms* itself is derived (by Legendary Etymology) from the Dragon, or *Worm*, which Siegfried slew, the figure of which once formed the City Arms; in past times, there was also to be seen here an ancient strong *Riesen-Haus* (Giant's-house), and many a memorial of Siegfried: his Lance, 66 feet long (almost 80 English feet), in the Cathedral; his Statue, of gigantic size, on the *Neue Thurm* (New Tower) on the Rhine;' &c. &c. 'And lastly the Siegfried's Chapel, in primeval, Pre-Gothic architecture, not long since pulled down. In the time of the *Meistersängers* too, the Stadtrath was bound to give every Master, who sang the lay of Siegfried (*Meisterlied von Siegfrieden*, the purport of which is now unknown) without mistake, a certain gratuity.' *Glossary to the Nibelungen*, § *Worms*.

One is sorry to learn that this famed Imperial City is no longer Imperial, but much fallen in every way from its palmy state; the 30,000 inhabitants, to be found there in Gustavus Adolphus' time, having now declined into some 6,800,—'who maintain themselves by wine-growing, Rhine-boats, tobacco-manufacture, and making sugar-of-lead.' So hard has war, which respects nothing, pressed on Worms, ill-placed for safety, on the hostile border: Louvois, or Louis XIV., in 1689, had it utterly devastated; whereby in the interior, 'spaces that were once covered with buildings are now gardens.' See *Conv. Lexicon*, § *Worms*.

Brave tents and hutches You saw raised on the grass,
Other side the Rhine-stream That camp it pitched was:
The king to stay a while Was besought of his fair wife;
That night she saw him with her, And never more in life.

Trumpets and flutes spoke out, At dawning of the day,
That time was come for parting, So they rose to march away:
Who loved-one had in arms Did kiss that same, I ween;
And fond farewells were bidden By cause of Etzel's Queen.

Frau Ute's noble sons They had a serving-man,
A brave one and a true: Or ever the march began,
He speaketh to King Gunther, What for his ear was fit,
He said: "Woe for this journey, I grieve because of it."

He, Rumold hight, the Sewer, Was known as hero true;
He spake: "Whom shall this people And land be trusted to?
Woe on't, will nought persuade ye, Brave Recken, from this road!
Frau Chriemhild's flattering message No good doth seem to bode."

"The land to thee be trusted, And my fair boy also,
And serve thou well the women, I tell thee ere I go;
Whomso thou findest weeping Her heart give comfort to;
No harm to one of us King Etzel's wife will do."

The steeds were standing ready, For the Kings and for their men;
With kisses tenderest Took leave full many then,
Who, in gallant cheer and hope, To march were nought afraid:
Them since that day bewaileth Many a noble wife and maid.

But when the rapid Recken Took horse and prickt away,
The women shent in sorrow You saw behind them stay;
Of parting all too long Their hearts to them did tell;
When grief so great is coming, The mind forebodes not well.

Nathless the brisk Burgonden All on their way did go,
Then rose the country over A mickle dole and woe;
On both sides of the hills Woman and man did weep:
Let their folk do how they list, These gay their course did keep.

The Nibelungen Recken* Did march with them as well,
In a thousand glittering hauberks, Who at home had ta'en farewell
Of many a fair woman Should see them never more;
The wound of her brave Siegfried Did grieve Chriemhild sore.

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* These are the Nibelungen proper who had come to Worms with Siegfried, on the famed bridal journey from Isenstein, long ago.

Then 'gan they shape their journey Towards the River Maine,
All on through East Franconia, King Gunther and his train;
Hagen he was their leader, Of old did know the way;
Dankwart did keep, as marshal, Their ranks in good array.

As they, from East Franconia, The Salfield rode along,
Might you have seen them prancing, A bright and lordly throng,
The Princes and their vassals, All heroes of great fame:
The twelfth morn brave King Gunther Unto the Donau came.

There rode Von Troneg Hagen, The foremost of that host,
He was to the Nibelungen The guide they lov'd the most:
The Ritter keen dismounted, Set foot on the sandy ground,
His steed to a tree he tied, Looked wistful all around.

"Much scaith," Von Troneg said, "May lightly chance to thee,
King Gunther, by this tide, As thou with eyes mayst see:
The river is overflowing, Full strong runs here its stream,
For crossing of this Donau Some counsel might well beseem."

"What counsel hast thou, brave Hagen," King Gunther then did say,
"Of thy own wit and cunning? Dishearten me not, I pray:
Thyself the ford wilt find us, If knightly skill it can,
That safe to yonder shore We may pass both horse and man."

"To me, I trow," spake Hagen, "Life hath not grown so cheap,
To go with will and drown me In riding these waters deep;
But first, of men some few By this hand of mine shall die,
In great King Etzel's country, As best good-will have I.

But bide ye here by the River, Ye Ritters brisk and sound,
Myself will seek some boatman, If boatman here be found,
To row us at his ferry, Across to Gelfrat's land:"
The Troneger grasped his buckler, Fared forth along the strand.

He was full bravely harness'd, Himself he knightly bore,
With buckler and with helmet, Which bright enough he wore;
And, bound above his hauberk, A weapon broad was seen,
That cut with both its edges, Was never sword so keen.

Observe, at the same time, that ever since the *Nibelungen Hoard* was transferred to Rhineland, the whole subjects of King Gunther are often called Nibelungen, and their subsequent history is this *Nibelungen Song*.

Then hither he and thither Search'd for the Ferryman,
He heard a splashing of waters, To watch the same he 'gan,
It was the white Mer-women, That in a fountain clear,
To cool their fair bodyes, Were merrily bathing here.

From these Mer-women, who 'skimmed aloof like white cygnets' at sight of him, Hagen snatches up 'their wondrous raiment;' on condition of returning which, they rede him his fortune; how this expedition is to speed. At first favourably:

She said: "To Etzel's country Of a truth ye well may hie,
For here I pledge my hand, Now kill me if I lie,
That heroes seeking honour Did never arrive thereat
So richly as ye shall do, Believe thou surely that."

But no sooner is the wondrous raiment restored them than they change their tale; for in spite of that matchless honour, it appears every one of the adventurous Recken is to perish.

Outspake the wild Mer-woman: "I tell thee it will arrive,
Of all your gallant host No man shall be left alive,
Except King Gunther's chaplain, As we full well do know;
He only, home returning, To the Rhine-land back shall go."

Then spake Von Troneg Hagen, His wrath did fiercely swell:
"Such tidings to my master I were right loath to tell,
That in King Etzel's country We all must lose our life:
Yet show me over the water, Thou wise all-knowing *wife*."

Thereupon, seeing him bent on ruin, she gives directions how to find the ferry, but withal counsels him to deal warily; the ferry-house stands on the other side of the river; the boatman, too, is not only the hottest-tempered of men, but rich and indolent; nevertheless, if nothing else will serve, let Hagen call himself Amelrich, and that name will bring him. All happens as predicted: the boatman, heedless of all shouting and offers of gold clasps, bestirs him lustily at the name of Amelrich; but the more indignant is he, on taking-in his fare, to find it a counterfeit. He orders Hagen, if he loves his life, to leap out.

"Now say not that," spake Hagen; "Right hard am I bested,
Take from me for good friendship This clasp of gold so red;
And row our thousand heroes And steeds across this river."
Then spake the wrathful boatman, "That will I surely never."

Then one of his oars he lifted, Right broad it was and long,
He struck it down on Hagen, Did the hero mickle wrong,
That in the boat he staggered, And alighted on his knee;
Other such wrathful boatman Did never the Troneger see.

His proud unbidden guest He would now provoke still more,
He struck his head so stoutly That it broke in twain the oar,
With strokes on head of Hagen; He was a sturdy wight:
Nathless had Gelfrat's boatman Small profit of that fight.

With fiercely-raging spirit The Troneger turn'd him round,
Clutch'd quick enough his scabbard, And a weapon there he found;
He smote his head from off him, And cast it on the sand,
Thus had that wrathful boatman His death from Hagen's hand.

Even as Von Troneg Hagen The wrathful boatman slew,
The boat whirl'd round to the river, He had work enough to do;
Or ever he turn'd it shorewards, To weary he began,
But kept full stoutly rowing, The bold King Gunther's man.

He wheel'd it back, brave Hagen, With many a lusty stroke,
The strong oar, with such rowing, In his hand asunder broke;
He fain would reach the Recken, All waiting on the shore,
No tackle now he had; Hei,* how deftly he spliced the oar,

With thong from off his buckler! It was a slender band;
Right over against a forest He drove the boat to land;
Where Gunther's Recken waited, In crowds along the beach;
Full many a goodly hero Moved down his boat to reach.

Hagen ferries them over himself 'into the unknown land,' like a right yare steersman; yet ever brooding fiercely on that prediction of the wild Mer-woman, which had outdone even his own dark forebodings. Seeing the Chaplain, who alone of them all was to return, standing in the boat beside his *chappelsoume* (pyxes and other sacred furniture), he determines to belie at least this part of the prophecy, and on a sudden hurls the chaplain overboard. Nay as the poor priest swims after the boat,

* These apparently insignificant circumstances, down even to mending the oar from his shield, are preserved with a singular fidelity in the most distorted editions of the Tale: see, for example, the Danish ballad, *Lady Grimhild's Wrack* (translated in the *Northern Antiquities*, p. 275, by Mr. Jamieson). This '*Hei!*' is a brisk interjection, whereby the worthy old Singer now and then introduces his own person, when anything very eminent is going forward.

he pushes him down, regardless of all remonstrance, resolved that he shall die. Nevertheless it proved not so: the chaplain made for the other side; when his strength failed, 'then God's hand helped him,' and at length he reached the shore. Thus does the stern truth stand revealed to Hagen, by the very means he took for eluding it: 'he thought with himself these Recken must all lose their lives.' From this time, a grim reckless spirit takes possession of him; a courage, an audacity, waxing more and more into the fixed strength of desperation. The passage once finished, he dashed the boat in pieces, and casts it in the stream, greatly as the others wonder at him.

"Why do ye this, good brother?" Said the Ritter Dankwart then;
"How shall we cross this river, When the road we come again?
Returning home from Hunland, Here must we lingering stay?"—
Not then did Hagen tell him That return no more could they.

In this shipment 'into the unknown land,' there lies, for the more penetrating sort of commentators, some hidden meaning and allusion. The destruction of the unreturning Ship, as of the Ship Argo, of Æneas's Ships, and the like, is a constant feature of such traditions: it is thought, this ferrying of the Nibelungen has a reference to old Scandinavian Mythuses; nay to the oldest, most universal emblems shaped out by man's Imagination; Hagen the ferryman being, in some sort, a type of Death, who ferries over his thousands and tens of thousands into a Land still more unknown.*

But leaving these considerations, let us remark the deep fearful interest which, in gathering strength, rises to a really tragical height in the close of this Poem. Strangely has the old Singer, in these his loose melodies, modulated the wild narrative into a poetic whole, with what we might call true art, were it not rather an instinct of genius still more unerring. A fateful gloom now hangs over the fortunes of the Nibelungen, which deepens and deepens as they march onwards to the judgment-bar, till all are engulfed in utter night.

Hagen himself rises in tragic greatness; so helpful, so prompt and strong is he, and true to the death, though without hope. If sin can ever be pardoned, then that one act of his is pardonable; by loyal faith, by free daring and heroic constancy, he has made amends for it. Well does he know what is coming; yet he goes forth to meet it, offers to Ruin his sullen welcome. Warnings thicken on him, which he treats lightly, as things

* See Von der Hagen's *Nibelungen, ihre Bedeutung*, etc.

now superfluous. Spite of our love for Siegfried, we must pity and almost respect the lost Hagen now in his extreme need, and fronting it so nobly. 'Mixed was his hair with a gray colour, his limbs strong, and threatening his look.' Nay, his sterner qualities are beautifully tempered by another feeling, of which till now we understood not that he was capable,—the feeling of friendship. There is a certain Volker of Alsace here introduced, not for the first time, yet first in decided energy, who is more to Hagen than a brother. This Volker, a courtier and noble, is also a *Spielmann* (minstrel), a *Fidelere gut* (fiddler good); and surely the prince of all *Fideleres;* in truth a very phœnix, melodious as the soft nightingale, yet strong as the royal eagle: for also in the brunt of battle he can play tunes; and with a *Steel Fiddlebow* beats strange music from the cleft helmets of his enemies. There is, in this continual allusion to Volker's *Schwert-fidelbogen* (Sword-fiddlebow), as rude as it sounds to us, a barbaric greatness and depth; the light minstrel of kingly and queenly halls is gay also in the storm of Fate, its dire rushing pipes and whistles to him: is he not the image of every brave man fighting with Necessity, be that duel when and where it may; smiting the fiend with giant strokes, yet every stroke *musical?*—This Volker and Hagen are united inseparably, and defy death together. 'Whatever Volker said pleased Hagen; whatever Hagen did pleased Volker.'

But into these last Ten *Aventiures*, almost like the image of a Doomsday, we must hardly glance at present. Seldom, perhaps, in the poetry of that or any other age, has a grander scene of pity and terror been exhibited than here, could we look into it clearly. At every new step new shapes of fear arise. Dietrich of Bern meets the Nibelungen on their way, with ominous warnings: but warnings, as we said, are now superfluous, when the evil itself is apparent and inevitable. Chriemhild, wasted and exasperated here into a frightful Medea, openly threatens Hagen, but is openly defied by him; he and Volker retire to a seat before her palace, and sit there, while she advances in angry tears, with a crowd of armed Huns, to destroy them. But Hagen has Siegfried's Balmung lying naked on his knee, the Minstrel also has drawn his keen Fiddlebow, and the Huns dare not provoke the battle. Chriemhild would fain single out Hagen for vengeance; but Hagen, like other men, stands not alone; and sin is an infection which will not rest with one victim. Partakers or not of his crime, the others also must share his punishment. Singularly touching, in the mean while,

is King Etzel's ignorance of what every one else understands too well; and how, in peaceful hospitable spirit, he exerts himself to testify his joy over these royal guests of his, who are bidden hither for far other ends. That night the wayworn Nibelungen are sumptuously lodged; yet Hagen and Volker see good to keep watch: Volker plays them to sleep: 'under the porch of the house he sat on the stone: bolder fiddler was there never any; when the tones flowed so sweetly, they all gave him thanks. Then sounded his strings till all the house rang; his strength and the art were great; sweeter and sweeter he began to play, till flitted forth from him into sleep full many a careworn soul.' It was their last lullaby; they were to sleep no more. Armed men appear, but suddenly vanish, in the night; assassins sent by Chriemhild, expecting no sentinel: it is plain that the last hour draws nigh.

In the morning the Nibelungen are for the Minster to hear mass; they are putting on gay raiment; but Hagen tells them a different tale; '"ye must take other garments, Recken; instead of silk shirts hauberks, for rich mantles your good shields: and, beloved masters, moreover squires and men, ye shall full earnestly go to the church, and plain to God the powerful (*Got dem richen*) of your sorrow and utmost need; and know of a surety that death for us is nigh."' In Etzel's Hall, where the Nibelungen appear at the royal feast in complete armour, the Strife, incited by Chriemhild, begins; the first answer to her provocation is from Hagen, who hews off the head of her own and Etzel's son, making it bound into the mother's bosom: 'then began among the Recken a murder grim and great.' Dietrich, with a voice of preternatural power, commands pause; retires with Etzel and Chriemhild; and now the bloody work has free course. We have heard of battles, and massacres, and deadly struggles in siege and storm; but seldom has even the poet's imagination pictured anything so fierce and terrible as this. Host after host, as they enter that huge vaulted Hall, perish in conflict with the doomed Nibelungen; and ever after the terrific uproar, ensues a still more terrific silence. All night and through morning it lasts. They throw the dead from the windows; blood runs like water; the Hall is set fire to, they quench it with blood, their own burning thirst they slake with blood. It is a tumult like the Crack of Doom, a thousand-voiced, wild-stunning hubbub; and, frightful like a Trump of Doom, the *Sword-fiddlebow* of Volker, who guards the door, makes music to that death-dance. Nor are traits of heroism wanting,

and thrilling tones of pity and love; as in that act of Rudiger, Etzel's and Chriemhild's champion, who, bound by oath, 'lays his soul in God's hand,' and enters that Golgotha to die fighting against his friends; yet first changes shields with Hagen, whose own, also given him by Rudiger in a far other hour, had been shattered in the fight. 'When he so lovingly bade give him the shield, there were eyes enough red with hot tears; it was the last gift which Rudiger of Bechelaren gave to any Recke. As grim as Hagen was, and as hard of mind, he wept at this gift which the hero good, so near his last times, had given him; full many a noble Ritter began to weep.'

At last Volker is slain; they are all slain, save only Hagen and Gunther, faint and wounded, yet still unconquered among the bodies of the dead. Dietrich the wary, though strong and invincible, whose Recken too, except old Hildebrand, he now finds are all killed, though he had charged them strictly not to mix in the quarrel, at last arms himself to finish it. He subdues the two wearied Nibelungen, binds them, delivers them to Chriemhild; 'and Herr Dietrich went away with weeping eyes, worthily from the heroes.' These never saw each other more. Chriemhild demands of Hagen, Where the Nibelungen Hoard is? But he answers her, that he has sworn never to disclose it, while any of her brothers live. "I bring it to an end," said the infuriated woman; orders her brother's head to be struck off, and holds it up to Hagen. '"Thou hast it now according to thy will," said Hagen; "of the Hoard knoweth none but God and I; from thee, she-devil (*valendinne*), shall it forever be hid."' She kills him with his own sword, once her husband's; and is herself struck dead by Hildebrand, indignant at the woe she has wrought; King Etzel, there present, not opposing the deed. Whereupon the curtain drops over that wild scene: 'the full highly honoured were lying dead; the people all had sorrow and lamentation; in grief had the king's feast ended, as all love is wont to do:'

Ine chan iu nicht bescheiden Waz sider da geschach.
Wan ritter unde wrovven Weinen man do sach,
Dar-zuo die edeln chnechte Ir lieben vriunde tot:
Da hat das mære ein ende; Diz ist der Nibelunge not.

I cannot say you now What hath befallen since;
The women all were weeping, And the Ritters and the prince,
Also the noble squires, Their dear friends lying dead:
Here hath the story ending; This is the *Nibelungen's Need.*

We have now finished our slight analysis of this Poem; and hope that readers who are curious in this matter, and ask themselves, What is the *Nibelungen?* may have here found some outlines of an answer, some help towards farther researches of their own. To such readers another question will suggest itself: Whence this singular production comes to us, When and How it originated? On which point also, what little light our investigation has yielded may be summarily given.

The worthy Von der Hagen, who may well understand the *Nibelungen* better than any other man, having rendered it into the modern tongue, and twice edited it in the original, not without collating some eleven manuscripts, and travelling several thousands of miles to make the last edition perfect,—writes a Book some years ago, rather boldly denominated *The Nibelungen, its Meaning for the present and forever;* wherein, not content with any measurable antiquity of centuries, he would fain claim an antiquity beyond all bounds of dated time. Working his way with feeble mine-lamps of etymology and the like, he traces back the rudiments of his beloved *Nibelungen*, 'to which the flower of his whole life has been consecrated,' into the thick darkness of the Scandinavian *Nifiheim* and *Muspelheim*, and the Hindoo Cosmogony; connecting it farther (as already in part we have incidentally pointed out) with the Ship Argo, with Jupiter's goatskin Ægis, the fire-creed of Zerdusht, and even with the heavenly Constellations. His reasoning is somewhat abstruse; yet an honest zeal, very considerable learning and intellectual force bring him tolerably through. So much he renders plausible or probable: that in the *Nibelungen*, under more or less defacement, lie fragments, scattered like mysterious Runes. yet still in part decipherable, of the earliest Thoughts of men; that the fiction of the Nibelungen was at first a religious or philosophical Mythus; and only in later ages, incorporating itself more or less completely with vague traditions of real events, took the form of a story, or mere Narrative of earthly transactions; in which last form, moreover, our actual *Nibelungen Lied* is nowise the original Narrative, but the second, or even the third redaction of one much earlier.

At what particular era the primeval fiction of the *Nibelungen* passed from its Mythological into its Historical shape; and the obscure spiritual elements of it wedded themselves to the obscure remembrances of the Northern Immigrations; and the Twelve Signs of the Zodiac became Twelve Champions of

Attila's Wife,—there is no fixing with the smallest certainty. It is known from history that Eginhart, the secretary of Charlemagne, compiled, by order of that monarch, a collection of the ancient German Songs; among which, it is fondly believed by antiquaries, this *Nibelungen* (not indeed our actual *Nibelungen Lied*, yet an older one of similar purport), and the main traditions of the *Heldenbuch* connected therewith, may have had honourable place. Unluckily Eginhart's Collection has quite perished, and only his Life of the Great Charles, in which this circumstance stands noted, survives to provoke curiosity. One thing is certain, Fulco Archbishop of Rheims, in the year 885, is introduced as 'citing certain German books,' to enforce some argument of his by instance of 'King Ermerich's crime toward his relations;' which King Ermerich and his crime are at this day part and parcel of the 'Cycle of German Fiction,' and presupposed in the *Nibelungen*.* Later notices, of a more decisive sort, occur in abundance. Saxo Grammaticus, who flourished in the twelfth century, relates that about the year 1130, a Saxon Minstrel being sent to Seeland, with a treacherous invitation from one royal Dane to another; and not daring to violate his oath, yet compassionating the victim, sang to him by way of indirect warning 'the Song of Chriemhild's Treachery to her Brothers;' that is to say, the latter portion of the Story which we still read at greater length in the existing *Nibelungen Lied*. To which direct evidence, that these traditions were universally known in the twelfth century, nay had been in some shape committed to writing, as 'German Books,' in the ninth or rather in the eighth,—we have still to add the probability of their being 'ancient songs,' even at that earliest date; all which may perhaps carry us back into the seventh or even sixth century; yet not farther, inasmuch as certain of the poetic personages that figure in them belong historically to the fifth.

Other and more open proof of antiquity lies in the fact, that these Traditions are so universally diffused. There are Danish and Icelandic versions of them, externally more or less altered and distorted, yet substantially real copies, professing indeed to be borrowed from the German; in particular we have the *Niflinga* and the *Wilkina Saga*, composed in the thirteenth century, which still in many ways illustrate the German original. Innumerable other songs and sagas point more remotely in the same direction. Nay, as Von der Hagen informs us, certain

* Von der Hagen's *Nibelungen*, Einleitung, § vii.

rhymed tales, founded on these old adventures, have been recovered from popular recitation, in the Faroe Islands, within these few years.

If we ask now, What lineaments of Fact still exist in these Traditions; what are the Historical events and persons which our primeval Mythuses have here united with, and so strangely metamorphosed? the answer is unsatisfactory enough. The great Northern Immigrations, unspeakably momentous and glorious as they were for the Germans, have well-nigh faded away utterly from all vernacular records. Some traces, nevertheless, some names and dim shadows of occurrences in that grand movement, still linger here; which, in such circumstances, we gather with avidity. There can be no doubt, for example, but this 'Etzel, king of Hunland,' is the Attila of history; several of whose real achievements and relations are faintly yet still recognisably pictured forth in these Poems. Thus his first queen is named Halke, and in the Scandinavian versions, Herka; which last (Erca) is also the name that Priscus gives her, in the well-known account of his embassy to Attila. Moreover, it is on his second marriage, which had in fact so mysterious and tragical a character, that the whole catastrophe of the *Nibelungen* turns. It is true, the 'Scourge of God' plays but a tame part here; however, his great acts, though all past, are still visible in their fruits: besides, it is on the Northern or German personages that the tradition chiefly dwells.

Taking farther into account the general 'Cycle,' or System of Northern Tradition, whereof this *Nibelungen* is the centre and keystone, there is, as indeed we saw in the *Heldenbuch*, a certain Kaiser Ottnit and a Dietrich of Bern; to whom also it seems unreasonable to deny historical existence. This *Bern* (Verona), as well as the *Rabenschlacht* (Battle of Ravenna), is continually figuring in these fictions; though whether under Ottnit we are to understand Odoacer the vanquished, and under Dietrich of Bern Theodoricus Veronensis, the victor both at Verona and Ravenna, is by no means so indubitable. Chronological difficulties stand much in the way. For our Dietrich of Bern, as we saw in the *Nibelungen*, is represented as one of Etzel's Champions: now Attila died about the year 450; and this Ostrogoth Theodoric did not fight his great Battle at Verona till 489; that of Ravenna, which was followed by a three years' siege, happening next year. So that before Dietrich could become Dietrich *of Bern*, Etzel had been gone almost half a century from the scene. Startled by this anachronism, some

commentators have fished out another Theodoric, eighty years prior to him of Verona, and who actually served in Attila's hosts, with a retinue of Goths and Germans; with which new Theodoric, however, the old Ottnit, or Odoacer, of the *Heldenbuch* must, in his turn, part company; whereby the case is no whit mended. Certain it seems, in the mean time, that *Dietrich*, which signifies *Rich in People*, is the same name which in Greek becomes Theodoricus; for at first (as in Procopius) this very *Theodoricus* is always written Θευδεριχ, which almost exactly corresponds with the German sound. But such are the inconsistencies involved in both hypotheses, that we are forced to conclude one of two things: either that the Singers of those old Lays were little versed in the niceties of History, and unambitious of passing for authorities therein; which seems a remarkably easy conclusion: or else, with Lessing, that they meant some quite other series of persons and transactions, some Kaiser Otto, and his two Anti-Kaisers (in the twelfth century); which, from what has come to light since Lessing's day, seems now an untenable position.

However, as concerns the *Nibelungen*, the most remarkable coincidence, if genuine, remains yet to be mentioned. 'Thwortz,' a Hungarian Chronicler (or perhaps Chronicle), of we know not what authority, relates, 'that Attila left his kingdom to his two sons Chaba and Aladar, the former by a Grecian mother, the latter by Kremheilch (Chriemhild) a German; that Theodoric, one of his followers, sowed dissension between them; and, along with the Teutonic hosts, took part with his half-countryman the younger son; whereupon rose a great slaughter, which lasted for fifteen days, and terminated in the defeat of Chaba (the Greek), and his flight into Asia.'* Could we but put faith in this Thwortz, we might fancy that some vague rumour of that Kremheilch Tragedy, swoln by the way, had reached the German ear and imagination; where, gathering round older Ideas and Mythuses, as Matter round its Spirit, the first rude form of *Chriemhilde's Revenge and the Wreck of the Nibelungen* bodied itself forth in Song.

Thus any historical lights emitted by these old Fictions is little better than darkness visible; sufficient at most to indicate that great Northern Immigrations, and wars and rumours of war have been; but nowise how and what they have been. Scarcely

* Weber (*Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*, p. 39), who cites Görres (*Zeitung für Einsiedler*) as his authority.

clearer is the special history of the Fictions themselves; where they were first put together, who have been their successive redactors and new-modellers. Von der Hagen, as we said, supposes that there may have been three several series of such. Two, at all events, are clearly indicated. In their present shape we have internal evidence that none of these poems can be older than the twelfth century; indeed, great part of the *Hero-book* can be proved to be considerably later. With this last it is understood that Wolfram von Eschenbach and Heinrich von Ofterdingen, two singers otherwise noted in that era, were largely concerned; but neither is there any demonstration of this vague belief: while again, in regard to the Author of our actual *Nibelungen*, not so much as a plausible conjecture can be formed.

Some vote for a certain Conrad von Würzburg; others for the above-named Eschenbach and Ofterdingen; others again for Klingsohr of Ungerland, a minstrel who once passed for a magician. Against all and each of which hypotheses there are objections; and for none of them the smallest conclusive evidence. Who this gifted singer may have been, only in so far as his Work itself proves that there was but One, and the style points to the latter half of the twelfth century,—remains altogether dark: the unwearied Von der Hagen himself, after fullest investigation, gives for verdict, 'we know it not.' Considering the high worth of the *Nibelungen*, and how many feeble ballad-mongers of that *Swabian Era* have transmitted us their names, so total an oblivion, in this infinitely more important case, may seem surprising. But those *Minnelieder* (Love-songs) and Provençal Madrigals were the Court Poetry of that time, and gained honour in high places; while the old National Traditions were common property and plebeian, and to sing them an unrewarded labour.

Whoever he may be, let him have our gratitude, our love. Looking back with a farewell glance, over that wondrous old Tale, with its many-coloured texture 'of joyances and high-tides, of weeping and of woe,' so skilfully yet artlessly knit-up into a whole, we cannot but repeat that a true epic spirit lives in it; that in many ways it has meaning and charms for us. Not only as the oldest Tradition of Modern Europe, does it possess a high antiquarian interest; but farther, and even in the shape we now see it under, unless the 'Epics of the Son of Fingal' had some sort of authenticity, it is our oldest Poem also; the earliest product of these New Ages, which on its own merits,

both in form and essence, can be named Poetical. Considering its chivalrous, romantic tone, it may rank as a piece of literary composition, perhaps considerably higher than the Spanish *Cid;* taking-in its historical significance, and deep ramifications into the remote Time, it ranks indubitably and greatly higher.

It has been called a Northern *Iliad;* but except in the fact that both Poems have a narrative character, and both sing 'the destructive rage' of men, the two have scarcely any similarity. The Singer of the *Nibelungen* is a far different person from Homer; far inferior both in culture and in genius. Nothing of the glowing imagery, of the fierce bursting energy, of the mingled fire and gloom, that dwell in the old Greek, makes its appearance here. The German Singer is comparatively a simple nature; has never penetrated deep into life; never 'questioned Fate;' or struggled with fearful mysteries; of all which we find traces in Homer, still more in Shakspeare; but with meek believing submission, has taken the Universe as he found it represented to him; and rejoices with a fine childlike gladness in the mere outward shows of things. He has little power of delineating character; perhaps he had no decisive vision thereof. His persons are superficially distinguished, and not altogether without generic difference; but the portraiture is imperfectly brought out: there lay no true living original within him. He has little Fancy; we find scarcely one or two similitudes in his whole Poem; and these one or two, which moreover are repeated, betoken no special faculty that way. He speaks of the 'moon among stars;' says often, of sparks struck from steel armour in battle, and so forth, that they were *wie es wehte der wind*, 'as if the wind were blowing them.' We have mentioned Tasso along with him; yet neither in this case is there any close resemblance; the light playful grace, still more the Italian pomp and sunny luxuriance of Tasso are wanting in the other. His are humble wood-notes wild; no nightingale's, but yet a sweet sky-hidden lark's. In all the rhetorical gifts, to say nothing of rhetorical attainments, we should pronounce him even poor.

Nevertheless, a noble soul he must have been, and furnished with far more essential requisites for Poetry than these are: namely, with the heart and feeling of a Poet. He has a clear eye for the Beautiful and True; all unites itself gracefully and compactly in his imagination: it is strange with what careless felicity he winds his way in that complex Narrative, and, be the subject what it will, comes through it unsullied, and with a smile. His great strength is an unconscious instinctive strength;

wherein truly lies his highest merit. The whole spirit of Chivalry, of Love, and heroic Valour, must have lived in him and inspired him. Everywhere he shows a noble Sensibility; the sad accents of parting friends, the lamentings of women, the high daring of men, all that is worthy and lovely prolongs itself in melodious echoes through his heart. A true old Singer, and taught of Nature herself! Neither let us call him an inglorious Milton, since now he is no longer a mute one. What good were it that the four or five Letters composing his Name could be printed, and pronounced, with absolute certainty? All that was mortal in him is gone utterly; of his life, and its environment, as of the bodily tabernacle he dwelt in, the very ashes remain not: like a fair heavenly Apparition, which indeed he *was*, he has melted into air, and only the Voice he uttered, in virtue of its inspired gift, yet lives and will live.

To the Germans this *Nibelungen Song* is naturally an object of no common love; neither if they sometimes overvalue it, and vague antiquarian wonder is more common than just criticism, should the fault be too heavily visited. After long ages of concealment, they have found it in the remote wilderness, still standing like the trunk of some almost antediluvian oak; nay with boughs on it still green, after all the wind and weather of twelve hundred years. To many a patriotic feeling, which lingers fondly in solitary places of the Past, it may well be a rallying-point, and 'Lovers' *Trysting-Tree*.'

For us also it has its worth. A creation from the old ages, still bright and balmy, if we visit it; and opening into the first History of Europe, of Mankind. Thus all is not oblivion; but on the edge of the abyss that separates the Old world from the New, there hangs a fair Rainbow-land; which also, in curious repetitions of itself (*twice* over, say the critics), as it were in a secondary and even a ternary reflex, sheds some feeble twilight far into the deeps of the primeval Time.

GOETHE'S WORKS.*

[1832.]

It is now four years since we specially invited attention to this Book; first in an essay on the graceful little fantasy-piece of *Helena*, then in a more general one on the merits and workings of Goethe himself: since which time two important things have happened in reference to it; for the publication, advancing with successful regularity, reached its fortieth and last volume in 1830; and now, still more emphatically to conclude both this 'completed, final edition,' and all other editions, endeavours and attainments of one in whose hands lay so much, come tidings that the venerable man has been recalled from our earth, and of his long labours and high faithful stewardship we have had what was appointed us.

The greatest epoch in a man's life is not always his death; yet for bystanders, such as contemporaries, it is always the most noticeable. All other epochs are transition-points from one visible condition to another visible; the days of their occurrence are like any other days, from which only the clearer-sighted will distinguish them; bridges they are, over which the smooth highway runs continuous, as if no Rubicon were there. But the day in a mortal's destinies which is like no other is his death-day: here, too, is a transition, what we may call a bridge, as at other epochs; but now from the keystone onwards half the arch rests on invisibility; this is a transition out of visible Time into invisible Eternity.

Since Death, as the palpable revelation (not to be overlooked

* Foreign Quarterly Review, No. 19.—*Goethes Werke. Vollständige Ausgabe letzter Hand* (Goethe's Works. Completed, final Edition), 40 voll. Stuttgard and Tübingen, 1827-30.

by the dullest) of the mystery of wonder and depth and fear, which everywhere from beginning to ending through its whole course and movement lies under Life, is in any case so great,—we find it not unnatural that hereby a new look of greatness, a new interest should be impressed on whatsoever has preceded it and led to it; that even towards some man, whose history did not then first become significant, the world should turn, at his departure, with a quite peculiar earnestness, and now seriously ask itself a question, perhaps never seriously asked before, What the purport and character of his presence here was; now when he has gone hence, and is not present here, and will remain absent forevermore. It is the conclusion that crowns the work; much more the irreversible conclusion wherein all is concluded: thus is there no life so mean but a death will make it memorable.

At all lykewakes, accordingly, the doings and endurances of the Departed are the theme: rude souls, rude tongues grow eloquently busy with him; a whole septuagint of beldames are striving to render, in such dialect as they have, the small bible, or apocrypha, of his existence, for the general perusal. The least famous of mankind will for once become public, and have his name printed, and read not without interest: in the Newspaper Obituaries; on some frail memorial, under which he has crept to sleep. Foolish love-sick girls know that there is one method to impress the obdurate false Lovelace, and wring his bosom; the method of drowning: foolish ruined dandies, whom the tailor will no longer trust, and the world turning on its heel is about forgetting, can recall it to attention by report of pistol; and so, in a worthless death, if in a worthless life no more, reattain the topgallant of renown,—for one day. Death is ever a sublimity and supernatural wonder, were there no other left: the last act of a most strange drama, which is not dramatic, but has now become real; wherein, miraculously, Furies, god-missioned, have in actual person risen from the abyss, and do verily dance there in that terror of all terrors, and wave their dusky-glaring torches, and shake their serpent-hair! Out of which heart-thrilling, so authentically tragic fifth-act there goes, as we said, a new meaning over all the other four; making them likewise tragic and authentic, and memorable in some measure, were they formerly the sorriest pickle-herring farce.

But above all, when a Great Man dies, then has the time come for putting us in mind that he was alive; biographies and

biographic sketches, criticisms, characters, anecdotes, reminiscences, issue forth as from opened springing fountains; the world, with a passion whetted by impossibility, will yet a while retain, yet a while speak with, though only to the unanswering echoes, what it has lost without remedy: thus is the last event of life often the loudest; and real spiritual *Apparitions* (who have been named Men), as false imaginary ones are fabled to do, vanish in thunder.

For ourselves, as regards the great Goethe, if not seeking to be foremost in this natural movement, neither do we shun to mingle in it. The life and ways of such men as he, are, in all seasons, a matter profitable to contemplate, to speak of: if in this death-season, long with a sad reverence looked forward to, there has little increase of light, little change of feeling arisen for the writer, a readier attention, nay a certain expectancy, from some readers is call sufficient. Innumerable meditations and disquisitions on this subject must yet pass through the minds of men; on all sides must it be taken up, by various observers, by successive generations, and ever a new light may evolve itself: why should not this observer, on this side, set down what he partially has seen into; and the necessary process thereby be forwarded, at any rate continued?

A continental Humorist, of deep-piercing, resolute though strangely perverse faculty, whose works are as yet but sparingly if at all cited in English literature, has written a chapter, somewhat in the nondescript manner of metaphysico-rhetorical, homiletic-exegetic rhapsody, on the *Greatness of Great Men;* which topic we agree with him in reckoning one of the most pregnant. The time, indeed, is come when much that was once found visibly subsistent Without must anew be sought for Within; many a human feeling, indestructible and to man's well-being indispensable, which once manifested itself in expressive forms to the Sense, now lies hidden in the *formless* depths of the Spirit, or at best struggles out obscurely in forms become superannuated, altogether inexpressive and unrecognisable; from which paralysed imprisoned state, often the best effort of the thinker is required, and moreover were well applied, to deliver it. For if the Present is to be the 'living sum-total of the whole Past,' nothing that ever lived in the Past must be let wholly die; whatsoever was done, whatsoever was said or written aforetime was done and written for our edification. In such state of imprisonment, paralysis and unrecognisable defacement, as compared with its condition in the

old ages, lies this our feeling towards great men; wherein, and in the much else that belongs to it, some of the deepest human interests will be found involved. A few words from Herr Professor Teufelsdröckh, if they help to set this preliminary matter in a clearer light, may be worth translating here. Let us first remark with him, however, 'how wonderful in all cases, great or little, is the importance of man to man:'

'Deny it as he will,' says Teufelsdröckh, 'man reverently loves man, and daily by action evidences his belief in the divineness of man. What a more than regal mystery encircles the poorest of living souls for us! The highest is not independent of him; his suffrage has value: could the highest monarch convince himself that the humblest beggar with sincere mind despised him, no serried ranks of halberdiers and bodyguards could shut out some little twinge of pain; some emanation from the low had pierced into the bosom of the high. Of a truth, men are mystically united; a mystic bond of brotherhood makes all men one.

'Thus too has that fierce false hunting after Popularity, which you often wonder at, and laugh at, a basis on something true: nay, under the other aspect, what is that wonderful spirit of Interference, were it but manifested as the paltriest scandal and tea-table backbiting, other than inversely or directly, a heartfelt indestructible sympathy of man with man? Hatred itself is but an inverse love. The philosopher's wife complained to the philosopher that certain two-legged animals without feathers spake evil of him, spitefully criticised his goings out and comings in; wherein she too failed not of her share; "Light of my life," answered the philosopher, "it is their love of us, unknown to themselves, and taking a foolish shape; thank them for it, and do thou love them more wisely. Were we mere steam-engines working here under this roof-tree they would scorn to speak of us once in a twelvemonth." The last stage of human perversion, it has been said, is when sympathy corrupts itself into envy; and the indestructible interest we take in men's doings has become a joy over their faults and misfortunes: this is the last and lowest stage; lower than this we cannot go: the absolute petrifaction of indifference is not attainable on this side total death.

'And now,' continues the Professor, 'rising from these lowest tea-table regions of human communion into the higher and highest, is there not still in the world's demeanour towards Great Men, enough to make the old practice of *Hero-worship*

intelligible, nay significant? Simpleton! I tell thee Hero-worship still continues; it is the only creed which never and nowhere grows or can grow obsolete. For always and everywhere this remains a true saying: *Il y a dans le cœur humain un fibre religieux.* Man always *worships* something; always he sees the Infinite shadowed forth in something finite; and indeed can and must so see it in *any* finite thing, once tempt him well to *fix* his eyes thereon. Yes, in practice, be it in theory or not, we are all Supernaturalists; and have an infinite happiness or an infinite woe not only waiting us hereafter, but looking out on us through any pitifulest present good or evil;—as, for example, on a high poetic Byron through his lameness; as on all young souls through their first lovesuit; as on older souls, still more foolishly, through many a lawsuit, paper-battle, political horse-race or ass-race. Atheism, it has been said, is impossible; and truly, if we will consider it, no Atheist denies a Divinity, but only some NAME (*Nomen*, *Numen*) of a Divinity: the God is still present there, working in that benighted heart, were it only as a god of darkness. Thousands of stern Sansculottes, to seek no other instance, go chanting martyr-hymns to their guillotine: these spurn at the name of a God; yet worship one (as hapless "Proselytes without the Gate") under the new pseudonym of Freedom. What indeed is all this that is called political fanaticism, revolutionary madness, force of hatred, force of love and so forth, but merely, under new designations, that same wondrous, wonder-working reflex from the Infinite, which in all times has given the Finite its empyrean or tartarean hue, thereby its blessedness or cursedness, its marketable worth or unworth?

'Remark, however, as illustrative of several things, and more to the purpose here, that man does in strict speech always remain the clearest symbol of the Divinity to man. Friend Novalis, the devoutest heart I knew, and of purest depth, has not scrupled to call man, what the Divine Man is called in Scripture, a "Revelation in the Flesh." "There is but one temple in the world," says he, "and that is the body of man. Bending before men is a reverence done to this revelation in the flesh. We touch heaven when we lay our hand on a human body." In which notable words a reader that meditates them may find such meaning and scientific accuracy as will surprise him.

'The ages of superstition, it appears to be sufficiently known, are behind us. To no man, were he never so heroic, are

shrines any more built, and vows offered as to one having supernatural power. The sphere of the TRANSCENDENTAL cannot now, by that avenue of heroic worth, of eloquent wisdom, or by any other avenue, be so easily reached. The worth that in these days could *transcend* all estimate or survey, and lead men willingly captive into *infinite* admiration, into worship, is still waited for (with little hope) from the unseen Time. All that can be said to offer itself in that kind, at present, is some slight household devotion (*Haus-Andacht*), whereby this or the other enthusiast, privately in all quietness, can love his hero or sage without measure, and idealise, and so, in a sense, idolise him;—which practice, as man is by necessity an idol-worshipper (no offence to him *so* long as *idol* means accurately *vision*, clear *symbol*), and all wicked idolatry is but a *more* idolatrous worship, may be excusable, in certain cases praiseworthy. Be this as it will, let the curious eye gratify itself in observing how the old antediluvian feeling still, though now struggling out so imperfectly, and forced into unexpected shapes, asserts its existence in the newest man: and the Chaldeans or old Persians, with their Zerdusht, differ only in vesture and dialect from the French, with their Voltaire *étouffé sous des roses*.'*

This, doubtless, is a wonderful phraseology, but referable, as the Professor urges, to that capacious reservoir and convenience, 'the nature of the time:' 'A time,' says he, 'when, as in some Destruction of a Roman Empire, wrecks of old things are everywhere confusedly jumbled with rudiments of new; so that, till once the mixture and amalgamation be complete, and even have long continued complete and universally apparent, no grammatical *langue d'oc* or *langue d'oui* can establish itself, but only some barbarous mixed *lingua rustica*, more like a jargon than a language, must prevail; and thus the deepest matters be either barbarously spoken of, or wholly omitted and lost sight of, which were still worse.' But to let the Homily proceed:

'Consider, at any rate,' continues he elsewhere, 'under how many categories, down to the most impertinent, the world inquires concerning Great Men, and never wearies striving to represent to itself their whole structure, aspect, procedure, outward and inward! Blame not the world for such minutest

* *Die Kleider: ihr Werden und Wirken.* Von D. TEUFELSDRÖCKH. Weissnichtwo, Stillschweign'sche Buchhandlung, 1830.

curiosity about its great ones: this comes of the world's old-established necessity to worship: and, indeed, whom but its great ones, that "like celestial fire-pillars go before it on the march," ought it to worship? Blame not even that mistaken worship of sham great ones, that are not celestial fire-pillars, but terrestrial glass-lanterns with wick and tallow, under no guidance but a stupid fatuous one; of which worship the litanies and gossip-homilies are, in some quarters of the globe, so inexpressibly uninteresting Blame it not; pity it rather, with a certain loving respect.

'Man is never, let me assure thee, altogether a clothes-horse: under the clothes there is always a body and a soul. The Count von Bügeleisen, so idolised by our fashionable classes, is not, as the English Swift asserts, created wholly by the Tailor; but partially also by the supernatural Powers. His beautifully-cut apparel, and graceful expensive tackle and environment of all kinds, are but the symbols of a beauty and gracefulness, supposed to be inherent in the Count himself; under which predicament come also our reverence for his count-hood, and in good part that other notable phenomenon of his being worshipped because he *is* worshipped, of one idolater, sheep-like, running after him, because many have already run. Nay, on what other principle but this latter hast thou, O reader (if thou be not one of a thousand), read, for example, thy *Homer*, and found some real joy therein? All these things, I say, the apparel, the counthood, the existing popularity and whatever else can combine there, are symbols;—bank-notes, which, whether there be gold behind them, or only bankruptcy and empty drawers, pass current for gold. But how, now, could they so pass, if gold itself were not prized, and believed and known to be somewhere extant? Produce the actual gold visibly, and mark how, in these distrustful days, your most accredited bank-paper stagnates in the market! No Holy Alliance, though plush and gilding and genealogical parchment, to the utmost that the time yields, be hung round it, can gain for itself a dominion in the heart of any man; some thirty or forty millions of men's hearts being, on the other hand, subdued into loyal reverence by a Corsican Lieutenant of Artillery. Such is the difference between God-creation and Tailor-creation. Great is the Tailor, but not the greatest. So, too, in matters spiritual, what avails it that a man be Doctor of the Sorbonne, Doctor of Laws, of Both Laws; and can cover half a square foot in pica-type with the list of his fellowships,

arranged as equilateral triangle, at the vertex an "&c." over and above, and with the parchment of his diplomas could thatch the whole street he lives in: what avails it? The man is but an owl; of prepossessing gravity, indeed; much respected by simple neighbours; but to whose sorrowful hootings no creature hastens, eager to listen. While, again, let but some riding gauger arrive under cloud of night at a Scottish inn, and word be whispered that it is Robert Burns; in few instants all beds and trucklebeds from garret to cellar, are left vacant, and gentle and simple, with open eyes and erect ears, are gathered together.'

Whereby, at least, from amid this questionable *lingua*, 'more like a jargon than a language,' so much may have become apparent: What unspeakable importance the world attaches, has ever attached (expressing the same by all possible methods) and will ever attach, to its great men. Deep and venerable, whether looked at in the Teufelsdröckh manner or otherwise, is this love of men for great men, this their exclusive admiration of great men; a quality of vast significance, if we consider it well; for, as in its origin it reaches up into the highest and even holiest provinces of man's nature, so in his practical history it will be found to play the most surprising part. Does not, for one example, the fact of such a temper indestructibly existing in all men, point out man as an essentially governable and teachable creature, and forever refute that calumny of his being by nature insubordinate, prone to rebellion? Men seldom, or rather never for a length of time and deliberately, rebel against anything that does not deserve rebelling against. Ready, ever zealous is the obedience and devotedness they show to the great, to the really high; prostrating their whole possession and self, body, heart, soul and spirit, under the feet of whatsoever is authentically above them. Nay, in most times, it is rather a slavish devotedness to those who only seem and pretend to be above them that constitutes their fault.

But why seek special instances? Is not Love, from of old, known to be the beginning of all things? And what is admiration of the great but love of the truly lovable? The first product of love is *imitation*, that all-important peculiar gift of man, whereby Mankind is not only held socially together in the present time, but connected in like union with the past and the future; so that the attainment of the innumerable Departed can be conveyed down to the Living, and transmitted with increase to the Unborn. Now great men, in particular spiritually great

men (for all men have a spirit to guide, though all have not kingdoms to govern and battles to fight), are the men universally imitated and learned of, the glass in which whole generations survey and shape themselves.

Thus is the Great Man of an age, beyond comparison, the most important phenomenon therein; all other phenomena, were they Waterloo Victories, Constitutions of the Year One, glorious revolutions, new births of the golden age in what sort you will, are small and trivial. Alas, all these pass away, and are left extinct behind, like the tar-barrels they were celebrated with; and the new-born golden age proves always to be still-born: neither is there, was there or will there be any other golden age possible, save only in this. in new increase of worth and wisdom;—that is to say, therefore, in the new arrival among us of wise and worthy men. Such arrivals are the great occurrences, though unnoticed ones; all else that can occur, in what kind soever, is but the *road*, up-hill or down-hill, rougher or smoother; nowise the *power* that will nerve us for travelling forward thereon. So little comparatively can fore-thought or the cunningest mechanical precontrivance do for a nation, for a world! Ever must we wait on the bounty of Time, and see what leader shall be born for us, and whither he will lead.

Thus too, in defect of great men, noted men become important; the Noted Man of an age is the emblem and living summary of the Ideal which that age has fashioned for itself: show me the noted man of an age, you show me the age that produced him. Such figures walk in the van, for great good or for great evil; if not leading, then driven and still farther misleading. The apotheosis of Beau Brummel has marred many a pretty youth; landed him not at any *goal* where oak garlands, earned by faithful labour and valour, carry men to the immortal gods; but, by a fatal inversion, at the King's Bench *gaol*, where he that has never sowed shall not any longer reap, still less any longer burn his barn, but scrape himself with potsherds among the ashes thereof, and consider with all deliberation 'what he wanted, and what he wants.'

To enlighten this principle of reverence for the great, to teach us reverence, and whom we are to revere and admire, should ever be a chief aim of Education (indeed it is herein that instruction properly both begins and ends); and in these late ages, perhaps more than ever, so indispensable is now our need of clear reverence, so inexpressibly poor our supply.

'Clear reverence!' it was once responded to a seeker of light: 'all want it, perhaps thou thyself.' What wretched idols, of Leeds cloth, stuffed out with bran of one kind or other, do men either worship, or being tired of worshipping (so expensively without fruit), rend in pieces and kick out of doors, amid loud shouting and crowing, what they call 'tremendous cheers,' as if the feat were miraculous! In private life, as in public, delusion in this sort does its work; the blind leading the blind, both fall into the ditch.

'For, alas,' cries Teufelsdröckh on this occasion, 'though in susceptive hearts it is felt that a great man is unspeakably great, the specific marks of him are mournfully mistaken thus must innumerable pilgrims journey, in toil and hope, to shrines where there is no healing. On the fairer half of the creation, above all, such error presses hard. Women are born worshippers, in their good little hearts lies the most craving relish for greatness: it is even said, each chooses her husband on the hypothesis of his being a great man—in his way. The good creatures, yet the foolish! For their choices, no insight, or next to none, being vouchsafed them, are unutterable. Yet how touching also to see, for example, Parisian ladies of quality, all rustling in silks and laces, visit the condemned-cell of a fierce Cartouche; and in silver accents, and with the looks of angels, beg locks of hair from him; as from the greatest, were it only in the profession of highwayman! Still more fatal is that other mistake, the commonest of all, whereby the devotional youth, seeking for a great man to worship, finds such within his own worthy person, and proceeds with all zeal to worship *there*. Unhappy enough: to realise, in an age of such gas-light illumination, this basest superstition of the ages of Egyptian darkness!

'Remark, however, not without emotion, that of all rituals and divine services and ordinances ever instituted for the worship of any god, this of Self-worship is the ritual most faithfully observed. Trouble enough has the Hindoo devotee, with his washings and cookings and perplexed formularies, tying him up at every function of his existence: but is it greater trouble than that of his German self-worshipping brother; is it trouble even by the devoutest Fakir, so honestly undertaken and fulfilled? I answer, No; for the German's heart is in it. The German worshipper, for whom does he work, and scheme, and struggle, and fight, at his rising up and lying down, in all times and places, but for his god only? Can he escape from that divine presence of Self; can his heart waver, or his hand

wax faint in that sacred service? The Hebrew Jonah, prophet as he was, rather than take a message to Nineveh, took ship to Tarshish, hoping to hide there from his Sender; but in what ship-hull or whale's belly shall the madder German Jonah cherish hope of hiding from—Himself! Consider, too, the temples he builds, and the services of (shoulder-knotted) priests he ordains and maintains; the smoking sacrifices, thrice a day or oftener, with perhaps a psalmist or two of broken-winded laureats and literators, if such are to be had. Nor are his votive gifts wanting, of rings and jewels and gold embroideries, such as our Lady of Loretto might grow yellower to look upon. A toilsome, perpetual worship, heroically gone through: and then with what issue? Alas, with the worst. The old Egyptian leek-worshipper had, it is to be hoped, seasons of light and faith; his leek-god seems to smile on him; he is humbled, and in humility exalted, before the majesty of something, were it only that of germinative Physical Nature, seen through a germinating, not unnourishing potherb. The Self-worshipper, again, has no seasons of light, which are not of blue sulphur-light; hungry, envious pride, not humility in any sort, is the ashy fruit of his worship; his self-god growls on him with the perpetual wolf-cry, Give! Give! and your devout Byron, as the Frau Hunt, with a wise simplicity (*geistreich naiv*), once said, "must sit sulking like a great schoolboy, in pet because they have given him a plain bun and not a spiced one."—His bun was a life-rent of God's universe, with the tasks it offered, and the tools to do them with; *à priori*, one might have fancied it could be put up with for once.'

After which wondrous glimpses into the Teufelsdröckh Homily on the *Greatness of Great Men*, it may now be high time to proceed with the matter more in hand; and remark that our own much-calumniated age, so fruitful in noted men, is also not without its great. In noted men, undoubtedly enough, we surpass all ages since the creation of the world; and from two plain causes: First, that there has been a French Revolution, and that there is now pretty rapidly proceeding a European Revolution; whereby everything, as in the Term-day of a great city, when all mortals are removing, has been, so to speak, set out into the street; and many a foolish vessel of dishonour, unnoticed and worth no notice in its own dark corner, has become universally recognisable when once mounted on the summit of some furniture-wagon, and tottering there (as Com-

mittee-president, or other head-director), with what is put under it, slowly onwards to its new lodging and arrangement, itself, alas, hardly to get thither without *breakage*. Secondly, that the Printing Press, with stitched and loose leaves, has now come into full action; and makes, as it were, a sort of universal daylight, for removal and revolution and everything else to proceed in, far more commodiously, yet also far more conspicuously. A complaint has accordingly been heard that famous men abound, that we are quite overrun with famous men: however, the remedy lies in the disease itself; crowded succession already means quick oblivion. For wagon after wagon rolls off, and either arrives or is overset; and so, in either case, the vessel of dishonour, which, at worst, we saw only in crossing some street, will afflict us no more.

Of great men, among so many millions of noted men, it is computed that in our time there have been Two; one in the practical, another in the speculative province: Napoleon Buonaparte and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. In which dual number, inconsiderable as it is, our time may perhaps specially pride itself, and take precedence of many others; in particular, reckon itself the flowertime of the whole last century and half. Every age will, no doubt, have its superior man or men; but one *so* superior as to take rank among the high of all ages, this is what we call a great man; this rarely makes his appearance, such bounty of Nature and Accident must combine to produce and unfold him. Of Napoleon and his works all ends of the world have heard: for *such* a host marched not in silence through the frighted deep; few heads there are in this Planet which have not formed to themselves some featured or featureless image of him; his history has been written about, on the great scale and on the small, some millions of times, and still remains to be written: one of our highest literary problems. For such a 'light-nimbus' of glory and renown encircled the man; the environment he walked in was itself so stupendous, that the eye grew dazzled, and mistook his proportions; or quite turned away from him in pain and temporary blindness. Thus even among the clear-sighted there is no unanimity about Napoleon; and only here and there does his own greatness begin to be interpreted, and accurately separated from the mere greatness of his fame and fortune.

Goethe, again, though of longer continuance in the world, and intrinsically of much more unquestionable greatness and even importance there, could not be so noted by the world: for

if the explosion of powder-mines and artillery-parks naturally attracts every eye and ear; the approach of a new-created star (dawning on us, in new-created radiance, from the eternal Deeps!), though *this*, and not the artillery-parks, is to shape our destiny and *rule* the lower earth, is notable at first only to certain stargazers and weather-prophets. Among ourselves especially, Goethe had little recognition: indeed, it was only of late that his existence, as a man and not as a mere sound, became authentically known to us; and some shadow of his high endowments and endeavours, and of the high meaning that might lie therein, arose in the general mind of England, even of intelligent England. Five years ago, to rank him with Napoleon, like him as rising unattainable beyond his class, like him and more than he of quite peculiar moment of all Europe, would have seemed a wonderful procedure; candour even, and enlightened liberality, to grant him place beside this and the other home-born ready-writer, blessed with that special privilege of 'English cultivation,' and able thereby to write novels, heart-captivating, heart-rending, or of enchaining interest.

Since which time, however, let us say, the progress of clearer apprehension has been rapid and satisfactory: innumerable unmusical voices have already fallen silent on this matter; for in fowls of every feather, even in the pertest choughs and thievish magpies, there dwells a singular reverence of the eagle; no Dulness is so courageous, but if you once show it any gleam of a heavenly Resplendence, it will, at lowest, shut its eyes and say nothing. So fares it here with the old-established British critic; who, indeed, in these days of ours, begins to be strangely situated; so many new things rising on his horizon, black indefinable shapes, magical or not; the old brickfield (where he kneaded insufficient marketable bricks) all stirring under his feet; preternatural, mad-making tones in the earth and air;—with all which what shall an old-established British critic and brickmaker do, but, at wisest, puts his hands in his pockets, and, with the face and heart of a British mastiff, though amid dismal enough forebodings, see what it will turn to?

In the younger, more hopeful minds, again, in most minds that can be considered as in a state of growth, German literature is taking its due place: in such, and in generations of other such that are to follow them, some thankful appreciation of the greatest in German literature cannot fail; at all events this feeling that he *is* great and the greatest, whereby appreciation, and what alone is of much value, appropriation, first becomes

rightly possible. To forward such on their way towards appropriating what excellence this man realised and created for them, somewhat has already been done, yet not much; much still waits to be done. The field, indeed, is large: there are Forty Volumes of the most significant Writing that has been produced for the last two centuries; there is the whole long Life and heroic Character of him who produced them; all this to expatiate over and inquire into; in both which departments the deepest thinker, and most far-sighted, may find scope enough.

Nevertheless, in these days of the ten-pound franchise, when all the world (perceiving now, like the Irish innkeeper, that 'death and destruction are just coming in') will have itself represented in parliament; and the wits of so many are gone in this direction to gather wool, and must needs return more or less shorn; it were foolish to invite either young or old into great depths of thought on such a remote matter; the tendency of which is neither for the Reform Bill nor against it, but quietly *through* it and beyond it; nowise to prescribe this or that mode of *electing* members, but only to produce a few members *worth* electing. Not for many years (who knows how many!) in these harassed, hand-to-mouth circumstances, can the world's bleared eyes open themselves to study the true import of such topics; of this topic, the highest of such. As things actually stand, some quite cursory glances, and considerations close on the surface, to remind a few (unelected, unelective) parties interested, that it lies over for study, are all that can be attempted here: could we, by any method, in any measure, disclose for such the wondrous wonder-working *element* it hovers in, the *light* it is to be studied and inquired-after in, what is needfulest at present were accomplished.

One class of considerations, near enough the surface, we avoid; all that partakes of an elegiac character. True enough, nothing can be *done* or suffered, but there is something to be *said*, wisely or unwisely. The departure of our Greatest contemporary Man could not be other than a great event; fitted to awaken, in all who with understanding beheld it, feelings sad, but high and sacred, of mortality and immortality, of mourning and of triumph; far lookings into the Past and into the Future, —so many changes, fearful and wonderful, of fleeting Time; glimpses too of the Eternity these rest on, which knows no change. At the present date and distance, however, all this pertains not to us; has been uttered elsewhere, or may be left for utterance there. Let us consider the Exequies as past; that

the high Rogus, with its sweet-scented wood, amid the wail of music eloquent to speechless hearts, has flamed aloft, heaven-kissing, in sight of all the Greeks; and that now the ashes of the Hero are gathered into their urn, and the host has marched onwards to new victories and new toils; ever to be mindful of the dead, not to mourn for him any more. The host of the Greeks, in this case, was all thinking Europe: whether their funeral games were appropriate and worthy, we stop not to inquire; the time, in regard to such things, is empty or ill-provided, and this was what the time could conveniently do. All canonisation and solemn cremation are gone by; and as yet nothing suitable, nothing that does not border upon parody, has appeared in their room. A Bentham bequeaths his remains to be lectured over in a school of anatomy; and perhaps, even in this way, finds, as chief of the Utilitarians, a really nobler funeral than any other, which the prosaic age, rich only in crapes and hollow scutcheons (of timber as of words), could have afforded him.

The matter in hand being *Goethe's Works*, and the greatest work of every man, or rather the summary and net amount of all his works, being the Life he has led, we ask, as the first question: How it went with Goethe in that matter; what was the practical basis, of want and fulfilment, of joy and sorrow, from which his spiritual productions grew forth; the characters of which they must more or less legibly bear? In which sense, those Volumes entitled by him *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, wherein his personal history, what he has thought fit to make known of it, stands delineated, will long be valuable. A noble commentary, instructive in many ways, lies opened there, and yearly increasing in worth and interest; which all readers, now when the true quality of it is ascertained, will rejoice that circumstances induced and allowed him to write: for surely if old Cellini's counsel have any propriety, it is doubly proper in this case: the autobiographic practice he recommends (of which the last century in particular has seen so many worthy and worthless examples) was never so much in place as here. 'All men, of what rank soever,' thus counsels the brave Benvenuto, 'who have accomplished aught virtuous or virtuous-like, should, provided they be conscious of really good purposes, write down their own life: nevertheless, not put hand to so worthy an enterprise till after they have reached the age of forty.' All which ukase-regulations Goethe had abundantly fulfilled,—the

last as abundantly as any, for he had now reached the age of sixty-two.

'This year, 1811,' says he, 'distinguishes itself for me by persevering outward activity. The *Life of Philip Hackert* went to press; the papers committed to me all carefully elaborated as the case required. By this task I was once more attracted to the South: the occurrences which, at that period, had befallen me there, in Hackert's company or neighbourhood, became alive in the imagination; I had cause to ask, Why this which I was doing for another should not be attempted for myself? I turned, accordingly, before completion of that volume, to my own earliest personal history; and, in truth, found here that I had delayed too long. The work should have been undertaken while my mother yet lived; thereby had I got nigher those scenes of childhood, and been, by her great strength of memory, transported into the midst of them. Now, however, must these vanished apparitions be recalled by my own help; and first, with labour, many an incitement to recollection, like a necessary magic apparatus, be devised. To represent the development of a child who had grown to be remarkable, how this exhibited itself under given circumstances, and yet how in general it could content the student of human nature and his views: such was the thing I had to do.

'In this sense, unpretendingly enough, to a work treated with anxious fidelity, I gave the name *Wahrheit und Dichtung* (Truth and Fiction); deeply convinced that man in immediate Presence, still more in Remembrance, fashions and models the external world according to his own peculiarities.

'The business, as, with historical studying, and otherwise recalling of places and persons, I had much time to spend on it, busied me wheresoever I went or stood, at home and abroad, to such a degree that my actual condition became like a secondary matter; though again, on all hands, when summoned outwards by occasion, I with full force and undivided sense proved myself present.'*

These Volumes, with what other supplementary matter has been added to them (the rather as Goethe's was a life of manifold relation, of the widest connexion with important or elevated persons, not to be carelessly laid before the world, and he had the rare good fortune of arranging all things that regarded even his posthumous concernment with the existing generation, according to his own deliberate judgment), are perhaps likely to be, for a long time, our only authentic reference. By the last will of the deceased, it would seem, all his papers and effects are to lie exactly as they are, till after another twenty years.

* *Werke*, xxxii. 62.

Looking now into these magically-recalled scenes of childhood and manhood, the student of human nature will under all manner of shapes, from first to last, note one thing: The singular complex Possibility offered from without, yet along with it the deep never-failing Force from within, whereby all this is conquered and realised. It was as if accident and primary endowment had conspired to produce a character on the great scale; a will is cast abroad into the widest, wildest element, and gifted also in an extreme degree to prevail over this, to fashion this to its own form: in which subordinating and self-fashioning of its circumstances a character properly consists. In external situations, it is true, in occurrences such as could be recited in the Newspapers, Goethe's existence is not more complex than other men's; outwardly rather a pacific smooth existence: but in his inward specialties and depth of faculty and temper, in his position spiritual and temporal towards the world as it was, and the world as he could have wished it, the observant eye may discern complexity, perplexity enough; an extent of data greater, perhaps, than had lain in any life-problem for some centuries. And now, as mentioned, the force for solving this was, in like manner, granted him in extraordinary measure; so that we must say, his possibilities were faithfully and with wonderful success turned into acquisitions; and this man fought the good fight, not only victorious, as all true men are, but victorious without damage, and with an ever-increasing strength for new victory, as only great and happy men are. Not wounds and loss (beyond fast-healing skin-deep wounds) has the unconquerable to suffer; only ever-enduring toil; weariness,—from which, after rest, he will rise stronger than before.

Good fortune, what the world calls good fortune, awaits him from beginning to end; but also a far deeper felicity than this. Such worldly gifts of good fortune are what we call possibilities: happy he that can rule over them; but *doubly* unhappy he that cannot. Only in virtue of good guidance does that same good fortune prove good. Wealth, health, fiery light with Proteus many-sidedness of mind, peace, honour, length of days: with all this you may make no Goethe, but only some Voltaire; with the most that was fortuitous in all this, make only some short-lived, unhappy, unprofitable Byron.

At no period of the World's History can a gifted man be born when he will not find enough to do; in no circumstances come into life but there will be contradictions for him to reconcile, difficulties which it will task his whole strength to surmount,

if his whole strength suffice. Everywhere the human soul stands between a hemisphere of light and another of darkness; on the confines of two everlastingly hostile empires, Necessity and Freewill. A pious adage says, 'the back is made for the burden;' we might with no less truth invert it, and say, the burden was made for the back. Nay, so perverse is the nature of man, it has in all times been found that an external allotment superior to the common was more dangerous than one inferior; thus for a hundred that can bear adversity, there is hardly one that can bear prosperity.

Of riches, in particular, as of the grossest species of prosperity, the perils are recorded by all moralists; and ever, as of old, must the sad observation from time to time occur: Easier for a camel to pass through the eye of the needle! Riches in a cultured community are the strangest of things; a power all-moving, yet which any the most powerless and skilless can *put* in motion; they are the *readiest* of possibilities; the readiest to become a great blessing or a great curse. 'Beneath gold thrones and mountains,' says Jean Paul, 'who knows how many giant spirits lie entombed!' The first fruit of riches, especially for the man born rich, is to teach him faith in them, and all but hide from him that there is any other faith: thus is he trained up in the miserable eye-service of what is called Honour, Respectability; instead of a man we have but a *gigman*,—one who 'always kept a gig,' two-wheeled or four-wheeled. Consider, too, what this same gigmanhood issues in; consider that first and most stupendous of gigmen, Phaeton, the son of Sol, who drove the brightest of all conceivable gigs, yet with the sorrowfulest result. Alas, Phaeton was his father's heir; born to attain the highest fortune without earning it: he had *built* no sun-chariot (could not build the simplest wheelbarrow), but could and would insist on *driving* one; and so broke his own stiff neck, sent gig and horses spinning through infinite space, and set the universe on fire!—Or, to speak in more modest figures, Poverty, we may say, surrounds a man with ready-made barriers, which, if they mournfully gall and hamper, do at least prescribe for him and force on him a sort of course and goal; a safe and beaten though a circuitous course; great part of his guidance is secure against fatal error, is withdrawn from *his* control. The rich, again, has his whole life to guide, without goal or barrier, save of his own choosing; and tempted as we have seen, is too likely to guide it ill; often, instead of walking straight forward, as he might, does but, like Jeshurun, wax fat and kick; in which

process, it is clear, not the adamantine circle of Necessity whereon the World is built, but only his own limb-bones must go to pieces!—Truly, in plain prose, if we bethink us what a road many a Byron and Mirabeau, especially in these latter generations, have gone, it is proof of an uncommon inward wealth in Goethe, that the outward wealth, whether of money or other happiness which Fortune offered him, did in no case exceed the power of Nature to appropriate and wholesomely assimilate; that all outward blessedness grew to inward strength, and produced only blessed effects for him. Those 'gold mountains' of Jean Paul, to the giant that *can* rise above them, are excellent, both fortified and speculatory, heights, and do in fact become a *throne*, where happily they have not been a *tomb*.

Goethe's childhood is throughout of riant, joyful character: kind plenty in every sense, security, affection, manifold excitement, instruction encircles him; wholly an element of sun and azure, wherein the young spirit, awakening and attaining, can on all hands richly unfold itself. A beautiful boy, of earnest, lucid, serenely deep nature, with the peaceful completeness yet infinite incessant expansiveness of a boy, has, in the fittest environment, begun to *be:* beautiful he looks and moves; rapid, gracefully prompt, like the son of Maia; wise, noble, like Latona's son: nay (as all men may *now* see) he is, in very truth, a miniature incipient World-Poet; of all heavenly figures the beautifulest we know of that can visit this lower earth. Lovely enough shine for us those young years in old Teutonic Frankfort; mirrored in the far remembrance of the Self-historian, real yet ideal, they are among our most genuine poetic Idyls. No smallest matter is too small for us, when we think *who* it was that did it or suffered it. The little long-clothed urchin, mercurial enough with all his stillness, can throw a whole cargo of new-marketed crockery, piece by piece, from the balcony into the street, when once the feat is suggested to him; and comically shatters cheap delf-ware with the same right hand which tragically wrote and hurled forth the demoniac scorn of Mephistopheles, or as 'right hand' of Faust, 'smote the universe to ruins.' Neither smile more than enough (if thou be wise) that the gray-haired all-experienced man remembers how the boy walked on the Mayn bridge, and 'liked to look at the bright weather-cock' on the barrier there. That foolish piece of gilt wood, there glittering sunlit, with its reflex wavering in the Mayn waters, is awakening quite another glitter in the

young gifted soul: is not this foolish sunlit splendour also, now when there is an *eye* to behold it, one of Nature's doings? The eye of the young seer is here, through the paltriest chink, looking into the infinite Splendours of Nature,—where, one day, himself is to enter and dwell.

Goethe's mother appears to have been the more gifted of the parents: a woman of altogether genial character, great spiritual faculty and worth; whom the son, at an after time, put old family friends in mind of. It is gratifying for us that she lived to witness his maturity in works and honours; to know that the little infant she had nursed was grown to be a mighty man, the first man of his nation and time In the father, as prosperous citizen of Frankfort, skilled in many things; improved by travel, by studies both practical and ornamental; decorated with some diplomatic title, but passing, among his books, paintings, collections and household possessions, social or intellectual, spiritual or material, a quite undiplomatic independent life, we become acquainted with a German, not country- but city-*gentleman* of the last century; a character scarcely ever familiar in our Islands; now perhaps almost obsolete among the Germans too. A positive, methodical man, sound-headed, honest-hearted, sharp-tempered; with an uncommon share of volition, among other things, so that scarcely any obstacle would turn him back, but whatsoever he could not mount over he would struggle round, and in any case *be* at the end of his journey: many or all of whose good qualities passed also over by inheritance; and, in fairer combination, on nobler objects, to the whole world's profit, were seen a second time in action.

Family incidents; house-buildings, or rebuildings; arrivals, departures; in any case, newyear's-days and birthdays, are not wanting; nor city-incidents; many-coloured tumult of Frankfort fairs; Kaisers' coronations, expected and witnessed; or that glorious ceremonial of the yearly *Pfeiffergericht*, wherein the grandfather himself plays so imperial a part. World-incidents too roll forth their billows into the remotest creek, and alter the current there. The Earthquake of Lisbon hurls the little Frankfort boy into wondrous depths of another sort; enunciating dark theological problems, which no theology of his will solve. Direction, instruction, in like manner, awaits him in the Great Frederic's Seven-Years War; especially in that long billeting of King's Lieutenant Comte de Thorane, with his sergeants and adjutants, with his painters and picture-easels, his quick precision and decision, his 'dry gallantry' and

stately Spanish bearing;—though collisions with the 'house-father,' whose German house-stairs (though he silently endures the inevitable) were not new-built to be made a French highway of; who besides loves not the French, but the great invincible Fritz they are striving to beat down. Think, for example, of that singular congratulation on the Victory at Bergen:

'So then, at last, after a restless Passion-week, Passion-Friday, 1759, arrived. A deep stillness announced the approaching storm. We children were forbidden to leave the house; our father had no rest, and went out. The battle began; I mounted to the top story, where the field indeed was still out of my sight, but the thunder of the cannon and the volleys of the small arms could be fully discerned. After some hours, we saw the first tokens of the battle, in a row of wagons, whereon wounded men, in all sorts of sorrowful dismemberment and gesture, were driven softly past us to the Liebfrauen-Kloster, which had been changed into an hospital. The compassion of the citizens forthwith awoke. Beer, wine, bread, money were given to such as had still power of receiving. But when, erelong, wounded and captive Germans also were noticed in that train, the pity had no limits; it seemed as if each were bent to strip himself of whatever movable thing he had, to aid his countrymen therewith in their extremity.

'The prisoners, meanwhile, were the symptoms of a battle unprosperous for the Allies. My father, in his partiality, quite certain that these would gain, had the passionate rashness to go out to meet the expected visitors; not reflecting that the beaten side would in that case have to run over him. He went first into his garden, at the Friedberg Gate, where he found all quiet and solitary; then ventured forth to the Bornheim Heath, where soon, however, various scattered outrunners and baggage-men came in sight, who took the satisfaction, as they passed, of shooting at the boundary-stones, and sent our eager wanderer the reverberated lead singing about his ears. He reckoned it wiser, therefore, to come back; and learned on some inquiry, what the sound of the firing might already have taught him, that for the French all went well, and no retreat was thought of. Arriving home full of black humour, he quite, at the sight of his wounded and prisoner countrymen, lost all composure. From him also many a gift went out for the passing wagons, but only Germans were to taste of it; which arrangement, as Fate had so huddled friends and foes together, could not always be adhered to.

'Our mother, and we children, who had from the first built upon the Count's word, and so passed a tolerably quiet day, were greatly rejoiced, and our mother doubly comforted, as she that morning, on questioning the oracle of her jewel-box by the scratch of a needle,

had obtained a most consolatory answer not only for the present but for the future. We wished our father a similar belief and disposition; we flattered him what we could, we entreated him to take some food, which he had forborne all day; he refused our caresses and every enjoyment, and retired to his room. Our joy, in the mean while, was not disturbed; the business was over: the King's Lieutenant, who, to-day, contrary to custom, had been on horseback, at length returned; his presence at home was more needful than ever. We sprang out to meet him, kissed his hands, testified our joy. It seemed to please him greatly. "Well!" said he, with more softness than usual, "I am glad too for your sake, dear children." He ordered us sweetmeats, sweet wine, everything the best, and went to his chamber, where already a mass of importuners, solicitors, petitioners, were crowded.

'We held now a dainty collation; deplored our good father, who could not participate therein, and pressed our mother to bring him down; she, however, knew better, and how uncheering such gifts would be to him. Meanwhile she had put some supper in order, and would fain have sent him up a little to his room; but such irregularity was a thing he never suffered, not in extremest cases; so the sweet gifts being once put aside, she set about entreating him to come down in his usual way. He yielded at last, unwillingly, and little did we know what mischief we were making ready. The stairs ran free through the whole house, past the door of every ante-chamber. Our father, in descending, had to pass the Count's apartments. His ante-chamber was so full of people that he had at length resolved to come out, and despatch several at once; and this happened, alas, just at the instant our father was passing down. The Count stept cheerfully out, saluted him and said: "You will congratulate us and yourself that this dangerous affair has gone off so happily."—"Not at all!" replied my father, with grim emphasis: "I wish they had chased you to the Devil, had I myself gone too." The Count held-in for a moment, then burst forth with fury: "You shall repent this! You shall not"——'

— Father Goethe, however, has 'in the mean while quietly descended,' and sat down to sup much cheerfuller than formerly; he little caring, 'we little knowing, in what questionable way he had rolled the stone from his heart,' and how official friends must interfere, and secret negotiations enough go on, to keep him out of military prison, and worse things that might have befallen there. On all which may we be permitted once again to make the simple reflection: What a plagued and plaguing world, with its battles and bombardments, wars and rumours of war (which sow or reap no ear of corn for any man), this is! The boy, who here watches the musket-volleys and cannon-thunders of the great Fritz, shall, as man, witness the

siege of Mentz; fly with Brunswick Dukes before Dumouriez and his Sansculottes, through a country champed into one red world of mud, 'like Pharaoh' (for the carriage too breaks down) 'through the Red Sea;' and finally become involved in the universal fire-consummation of Napoleon, and by skill defend himself from hurt therein!

The father, with occasional subsidiary private tutors, is his son's schoolmaster; a somewhat pedantic pedagogue, with ambition enough and faithful goodwill, but more of rigour than of insight; who, however, works on a subject that he *cannot* spoil. Languages, to the number of six or seven, with whatsoever pertains to them; histories, syllabuses, knowledges-made-easy; not to speak of dancing, drawing, music, or, in due time, riding and fencing: all is taken-in with boundless appetite and aptitude; all is but fuel, injudiciously piled and of wet quality, yet under which works an unquenchable Greek-fire that will feed itself therewith, that will one day make it *all* clear and glowing. The paternal grandmother, recollected as a pale, thin, ever white and clean-dressed figure,' provides the children many a satisfaction; and at length, on some festive night, the crowning one of a puppet-show: whereupon ensues a long course of theatrical speculatings and practisings, somewhat as delineated, for another party, in the first book of *Meister's Apprenticeship;* in which Work, indeed, especially in the earlier portion of it, some shadow of the author's personal experience and culture is more than once traceable. Thus Meister's desperate burnt-offering of his young 'Poems on various Occasions,' was the image of a reality which took place in Leipzig; performed desperately enough, 'on the kitchen hearth, the thick smoke from which, flowing through the whole house, filled our good landlady with alarm.'

Old Imperial-Freetown Frankfort is not without its notabilities, tragic or comic; in any case, impressive and didactic. The young heart is filled with boding to look into the *Judengasse* (Jew-gate), where squalid painful Hebrews are banished to scour old clothes, and in hate, and greed, and Old-Hebrew obstinacy and implacability, work out a wonderful prophetic existence, as 'a people terrible from the beginning;' manages, however, to get admittance to their synagogue, and see a wedding and a circumcision. On its spike, aloft on one of the steeples, grins, for the last two-hundred years, the bleached skull of a malefactor and traitor; properly, indeed, not so much a traitor, as a Radical whose Reform Bill could not be carried

through. The future book-writer also, on one occasion, sees the execution of a book; how the huge printed reams rustle in the flames, are stirred-up with oven-forks, and fly half-charred aloft, the sport of winds; from which half-charred leaves, diligently picked up, he pieces himself a copy together, as did many others, and with double earnestness reads it.

As little is the old Freetown deficient in notable men; all accessible to a grandson of the Schultheiss,* who besides is a youth like no other. Of which originals, curious enough, and long since 'vanished from the sale-catalogues,' take only these two specimens.

'Von Reineck, of an old-noble house; able, downright, but stiff-necked; a lean black-brown man, whom I never saw smile. The misfortune befel him that his only daughter was carried-off by a friend of the family. He prosecuted his son-in-law with the most vehement suit; and as the courts, in their formality, would neither fast enough nor with force enough obey his vengeance, he fell-out with them; and there arose quarrel on quarrel, process on process. He withdrew himself wholly into his house and the adjoining garden, lived in a spacious but melancholy under-room, where for many years no brush of a painter, perhaps scarcely the besom of a maid, had got admittance. Me he would willingly endure; had specially recommended me to his younger son. His oldest friends, who knew how to humour him, his men of business and agents he often had at table: and, on such occasions, he failed not to invite me. His board was well furnished, his buffet still better. His guests, however, had one torment, a large stove smoking out of many cracks. One of the most intimate ventured once to take notice of it, and ask the host whether he could stand such an inconvenience the whole winter. He answered, like a second Timon, and Heautontimoroumenos: "Would to God this were the worst mischief of those that plague me!" Not till late would he be persuaded to admit daughter and grandson to his sight. the son-in-law was never more to show face before him.

'On this brave and unfortunate man my presence had a kind effect; for as he gladly spoke with me, in particular instructed me on political and state concerns, he seemed himself to feel assuaged and cheered. Accordingly, the few old friends who still kept about him, would often make use of me when they wished to soothe his indignant humour, and persuade him to any recreation. In fact he now more than once went

* *Schultheiss* is the title of the chief magistrate in some free-towns and republics, for instance, in Berne too. It seems to derive itself from *Schuldheissen*, and may mean the Teller of Duty, him by whom what *should* be is *hight*.

out with us, and viewed the neighbourhood again, on which, for so many years, he had not turned an eye.' * * *

'Hofrath Huisgen, not a native of Frankfort; of the Reformed religion, and thus incapable of public office, of advocacy among the rest, which latter, however, as a man much trusted for juristic talent, he, under another's signature, contrived quite calmly to practise, as well in Frankfort as in the Imperial Courts,—might be about sixty when I happened to have writing-lessons along with his son, and so came into the house. His figure was large; tall without being bony, broad without corpulency. His face, deformed not only by small-pox, but wanting one of the eyes, you could not look on, for the first time, without apprehension. On his bald head he wore always a perfectly white bell-shaped cap (*Glockenmütze*) tied at top with a ribbon. His night-gowns, of calamanco or damask, were always as if new-washed. He inhabited a most cheerful suite of rooms on the ground floor in the *Allee*, and the neatness of everything about him corresponded to it. The high order of his books, papers, maps made a pleasant impression. His son, Heinrich Sebastian, who afterwards became known by various writings on Art, promised little in his youth. Good-natured but heavy, not rude yet artless, and without wish to instruct himself, he sought rather to avoid his father, as from his mother he could get whatever he wanted. I, on the other hand, came more and more into intimacy with the master the more I knew of him. As he meddled with none but important law-cases, he had time enough to amuse and occupy himself with other things. I had not long been about him, and listened to his doctrine, till I came to observe that in respect of God and the World he stood on the opposition side. One of his pet books was *Agrippa de Vanitate Scientiarum;* this he particularly recommended me to read, and did therewith set my young brain, for a while, into considerable tumult. I, in the joy of my youth, was inclined to a sort of optimism, and with God or the Gods had now tolerably adjusted myself again; for, by a series of years, I had got to experience that there is many a balance against evil, that misfortunes are things one recovers from, that in dangers one finds deliverance, and does not always break his neck. On what men did and tried, moreover, I looked with tolerance, and found much praiseworthy which my old gentleman would nowise be content with. Nay, once, as he had been depicting me the world not a little on the crabbed side, I noticed in him that he meant still to finish with a trump-card. He shut, as in such cases his wont was, the blind left eye close; looked with the other broad out; and said, in a snuffling voice: "*Auch in Gott entdeck' ich Fehler.*"'

Of a gentler character is the reminiscence of the maternal grandfather, old Schultheiss Textor; with his gift of prophetic dreaming, 'which endowment none of his descendants inherited;' with his kind, mild ways; there as he glides about

in his garden, at evening, 'in black-velvet cap,' trimming 'the finer sort of fruit-trees,' with aid of those antique embroidered gloves or gauntlets, yearly handed him at the *Pfeiffergericht:* a soft, spirit-looking figure; the farthest outpost of the Past, which behind him melts into dim vapour. In Frau von Klettenberg, a religious associate of the mother's, we become acquainted with the *Schöne Seele* (Fair Saint) of *Meister;* she, at an after period, studied to convert her *Philo*, but only very partially succeeded. Let us notice also, as a token for good, how the young universal spirit takes pleasure in the workshops of handicraftsmen, and loves to understand their methods of labouring and of living:

'My father had early accustomed me to manage little matters for him. In particular, it was often my commission to stir-up the craftsmen he employed; who were too apt to loiter with him; as he wanted to have all accurately done, and finally for prompt payment to have the price moderated. I came, in this way, into almost all manner of workshops; and as it lay in my nature to shape myself into the circumstances of others, to feel every species of human existence, and with satisfaction participate therein, I spent many pleasant hours in such places; grew to understand the procedure of each, and what of joy and of sorrow, advantage or drawback, the indispensable conditions of this or that way of life brought with them. * * * The household economy of the various crafts, which took its figure and colour from the occupation of each, was also silently an object of attention; and so unfolded, so confirmed itself in me the feeling of the equality, if not of all men, yet of all men's situations; existence by itself appearing as the head condition, all the rest as indifferent and accidental.'

And so, amid manifold instructive influences, has the boy grown out of boyhood; when now a new figure enters on the scene, bringing far higher revelations:—

'As at last the wine was failing, one of them called the maid; but instead of her there came a maiden of uncommon, and to see her in this environment, of incredible beauty. "What is it?" said she, after kindly giving us good-evening: "the maid is ill and gone to bed: can I serve you?"—"Our wine is done," said one; "couldst thou get us a couple of bottles over the way, it were very good of thee."—"Do it, Gretchen," said another, "it is but a cat's-leap."—"Surely!" said she; took a couple of empty bottles from the table, and hastened out. Her figure, when she turned away from you, was almost prettier than before. The little cap sat so neat on the little head, which a slim

neck so gracefully united with back and shoulders. Everything about her seemed select; and you could follow the whole form more calmly, as attention was not now attracted and arrested by the true still eyes and lovely mouth alone.'

It is at the very threshold of youth that this episode of Gretchen (Margarete, Mar-*g'ret'-kin*) occurs; the young critic of slim necks and true still eyes shall now know something of natural magic, and the importance of one mortal to another; the wild-flowing bottomless sea of human Passion, glorious in auroral light (which, alas, may become infernal lightning), unveils itself a little to him. A graceful little episode we reckon it; and Gretchen better than most first-loves: wholly an innocent, wise, dainty maiden; pure and poor,—who vanishes from us here; but, we trust, in some quiet nook of the Rhineland, became wife and mother, and was the joy and sorrow of some brave man's heart, according as it is appointed. To the boy himself it ended painfully, almost fatally, had not sickness come to his deliverance; and here too he may experience how 'a shadow chases us in all manner of sunshine,' and in this *What-d'ye-call-it* of Existence the tragic element is not wanting. The name of Gretchen, not her story, which had nothing in it of that guilt and terror, has been made world-famous in the Play of *Faust*.—

Leipzig University has the honour of matriculating him. The name of his 'propitious mother' she may boast of, but not of the reality: alas, in these days, the University of the Universe is the only propitious mother of such; all other propitious mothers are but unpropitious superannuated dry-nurses fallen bedrid, from whom the famished nurseling has to *steal* even bread and water, if he will not die; whom for most part he soon takes leave of, giving perhaps (as in Gibbon's case), for farewell thanks, some rough tweak of the nose; and rushes desperate into the wide world an orphan. The time is advancing, slower or faster, when the bedrid dry-nurse will decease, and be succeeded by a walking and stirring wet one. Goethe's employments and culture at Leipzig lay in quite other groves than the academic: he listened to the Ciceronian Ernesti with eagerness, but the life-giving word flowed not from his mouth; to the sacerdotal, eclectic-sentimental Gellert (the divinity of all tea-table moral-philosophers of both sexes); witnessed 'the pure soul, the genuine will of the noble man,' heard 'his admonitions, warnings and entreaties, uttered in a

somewhat hollow and melancholy tone;' and then the Frenchman say to it all, "*Laissez le faire; il nous forme des dupes.*" 'In logic it seemed to me very strange that I must now take-up those spiritual operations which from of old I had executed with the utmost convenience, and tatter them asunder, insulate and as if destroy them, that their right employment might become plain to me. Of the Thing, of the World, of God, I fancied I knew almost about as much as the Doctor himself; and he seemed to me, in more than one place, to hobble dreadfully (*gewaltig zu hapern*).'

However, he studies to some profit with the Painter Oeser; hears, one day, at the door, with horror, that there is no lesson, for news of Winkelmann's assassination have come. With the ancient Gottsched, too, he has an interview: alas, it is a young Zeus come to dethrone old Saturn, whose time in the literary heaven is nigh run; for on Olympus itself, one Demiurgus passeth away and another cometh. Gottsched had introduced the reign of *water*, in all shapes liquid and solid, and long gloriously presided over the same; but now there is enough of it, and the 'rayless majesty' (had he been prophetic) here beheld the rayed one, before whom he was to melt away:—

'We announced ourselves. The servant led us into a large room, and said his master would come immediately. Whether we misinterpreted a motion he made I cannot say; at any rate, we fancied he had beckoned us to advance into an adjoining chamber. We did advance, and to a singular scene; for, at the same moment, Gottsched, the huge broad gigantic man, entered from the opposite door, in green damask nightgown, lined with red taffeta; but his enormous head was bald and without covering. This, however, was the very want to be now supplied: for the servant came springing-in at the side-door, with a full-bottomed wig on his hand (the locks fell down to his elbow), and held it out, with terrified gesture, to his master. Gottsched, without uttering the smallest complaint, lifted the head-gear with his left hand from the servant's arm; and very deftly swinging it up to its place on the head, at the same time, with his right hand, gave the poor man a box on the ear, which, as is seen in comedies, dashed him spinning out of the apartment; whereupon the respectable-looking Patriarch quite gravely desired us to be seated, and with proper dignity went through a tolerably long discourse.'

In which discourse, however, it is likely, little edification for the young inquirer could lie. Already by multifarious discoursings and readings he has convinced himself, to his despair,

of the watery condition of the Gottschedic world, and how 'the *Noachide* (Noaheid) of Bodmer is a true symbol of the deluge that has swelled-up round the German Parnassus,' and in literature as in philosophy there is neither landmark nor loadstar. Here, too, he resumes his inquiries about religion, falls into 'black scruples' about most things; and in 'the bald and feeble deliverances' propounded him has sorry comfort. Outward things, moreover, go not as they should: the copious philosophic harlequinades of that wag, Beyrish 'with a long nose,' unsettle rather than settle; as do, in many ways, other wise and foolish mortals of both sexes: matters grow worse and worse. He falls sick, becomes wretched enough; yet unfolds withal 'an audacious humour which feels itself superior to the moment, not only fears no danger, but even wilfully courts it.' And thus, somewhat in a wrecked state, he quits his propitious mother, and returns home.

Nevertheless let there be no reflections: he must now in earnest get forward with his Law, and on to Strasburg to complete himself therein; so has the paternal judgment arranged it. A Lawyer, the thing in these latter days called Lawyer, of a man in whom ever-bounteous Nature has sent us a Poet for the World! O blind mortals, blind over what lies closest to us, what we have the truest wish to see! In this young colt that caprioles there in young lustihood, and snuffs the wind with an 'audacious humour,' rather dangerous-looking, no Sleswic Dobbin, to rise to dromedary stature, and draw three tons avoirdupois (of street-mud or whatever else), has been vouchsafed; but a winged miraculous Pegasus to carry us to the heavens!—Whereon too (if we consider it) many a heroic Bellerophon shall, in times coming, mount, and destroy Chimæras, and deliver afflicted nations on the lower earth.

Meanwhile, be this as it may, the youth is gone to Strasburg to prepare for the *examen rigorosum;* though, as it turned out, for quite a different than the Law one. Confusion enough is in his head and heart; poetic objects too have taken root there, and will not rest till they have worked themselves into form. 'These,' says he, 'were Götz von Berlichingen and Faust. The written Life of the former had seized my inmost soul. The figure of a rude well-meaning self-helper, in wild anarchic time, excited my deepest sympathy. The impressive puppet-show Fable of the other sounded and hummed through me many-toned enough.'—'Let us withdraw, however,' subjoins he, 'into

the free air, to the high broad platform of the Minster; as if the time were still here, when we young ones often rendezvoused thither to salute, with full rummers, the sinking sun.' They had good telescopes with them; 'and one friend after another searched out the spot in the distance which had become the dearest to him; neither was I without a little eye-mark of the like, which, though it rose not conspicuous in the landscape, drew me to it beyond all else with a kindly magic.' This alludes, we perceive, to that Alsatian Vicar of Wakefield, and his daughter the fair Frederike; concerning which matter a word may not be useless here. Exception has been taken by certain tender souls, of the all-for-love sort, against Goethe's conduct in that business. He flirted with his blooming blue-eyed Alsatian, she with him, innocently enough, thoughtlessly enough, till they both came to love each other; and then, when the marrying point began to grow visible in the distance, he stopt short and would no farther. Adieu, he cried, and waved his lily hand. 'The good Frederike was weeping; I too was sick enough at heart.' Whereupon arises the question: Is Goethe a bad man; or is he not a bad man? Alas, worthy souls! if this world were all a wedding-dance, and *Thou-shalt* never came into collision with *Thou-wilt*, what a new improved time had we of it! But it is man's miserable lot, in the mean while, to eat and labour as well as wed; alas, how often, like Corporal Trim, does he spend the whole night, one moment dividing the world into two halves with his fair Beguine, next moment remembering that he has only a knapsack and fifteen florins to divide with any one! Besides, you do not consider that our dear Frederike, whom we too could weep for if it served, had a sound German heart within her stays; had furthermore abundance of *work* to do, and not even leisure to die of love; above all, that at this period, in the country parts of Alsatia, there were no circulating-library novels.

With regard to the false one's cruelty of temper, who, if we remember, saw a ghost in broad noon that day he rode away from her, let us, on the other hand, hear Jung Stilling, for he also had experience thereof at this very date. Poor Jung, a sort of German Dominie Sampson, awkward, honest, irascible, 'in old-fashioned clothes and bag-wig,' who had been several things, charcoal-burner, and, in repeated alternation, tailor and schoolmaster, was now come to Strasburg to study medicine; with purse long-necked, yet with head that had brains in it, and heart full of trust in God. A pious soul, who if he did

afterwards write books on the Nature of Departed Spirits, also restored to sight (by his skill in eye-operations) above *two thousand poor blind persons*, without fee or reward, even supporting many of them in the hospital at his own expense.

'There dined,' says he, 'at this table about twenty people, whom the two comrades' (Troost and I) 'saw one after the other enter. One especially, with large bright eyes, magnificent brow, and fine stature, walked gallantly (*muthig*) in. He drew Herr Troost's and Stilling's eyes on him; Herr Troost said, "That must be a superior man." Stilling assented, yet thought they would both have much vexation from him, as he looked like one of your wild fellows. This did Stilling infer from the frank style which the student had assumed; but here he was far mistaken. They found, meanwhile, that this distinguished individual was named Herr Goethe.

'Herr Troost whispered to Stilling, "Here it were best one sat seven days silent." Stilling felt this truth; they sat silent therefore, and no one particularly minded them, except that Goethe now and then hurled over (*herüberwälzte*) a look: he sat opposite Stilling, and had the government of the table without aiming at it.

'Herr Troost was neat, and dressed in the fashion; Stilling likewise tolerably so. He had a dark-brown coat with fustian under-garments: only that a scratch-wig also remained to him, which, among his bag-wigs, he would wear out. This he had put on one day, and came therewith to dinner. Nobody took notice of it except Herr Waldberg of Vienna. That gentleman looked at him; and as he had already heard that Stilling was greatly taken up about religion, he began, and asked him, Whether he thought Adam in Paradise had worn a scratch-wig? All laughed heartily, except Salzman, Goethe and Troost; these did not laugh. In Stilling wrath rose and burnt, and he answered: "Be ashamed of this jest; such a trivial thing is not worth laughing at!" But Goethe stuck-in and added: "Try a man first whether he deserves mockery. It is devil-like to fall upon an honest-hearted person who has injured nobody, and make sport of him!" From that time Herr Goethe took up Stilling, visited him, liked him, made friendship and brothership with him, and strove by all opportunities to do him kindness. Pity that so few are acquainted with this noble man in respect of his heart!'*

Here, indeed, may be the place to mention, that this noble man, in respect of his heart, and goodness and badness, is not altogether easy to get acquainted with; that innumerable persons, of the man-milliner, parish-clerk and circulating-library sort, will find him a hard nut to crack. Here in what question-

* *Stillings Wanderschaft.* Berlin and Leipzig, 1778.

able manner, so early as the year 1773, he expresses himself towards Herr Sulzer, whose beautiful hypothesis, that 'Nature meant, by the constant influx of satisfactions streaming-in upon us, to fashion our minds, on the whole, to softness and sensibility,' he will not leave a leg to stand on. '*On the whole*,' says he, 'she does no such thing; she rather, God be thanked, hardens her genuine children against the pains and evils she incessantly prepares for them; so that we name him the happiest man who is the strongest to make front against evil, to put it aside from him, and in defiance of it go the road of his own will.' 'Man's art in all situations is to fortify himself against Nature, to avoid her thousandfold ills, and only to enjoy his measure of the good; till at length he manages to include the whole circulation of his true and factitious wants in a palace, and fix as far as possible all scattered beauty and felicity within his glass walls, where accordingly he grows ever the weaker, takes to "joys of the soul," and his powers, roused to their natural exertion by no contradiction, melt away into' —*horresco referens*—'Virtue, Benevolence, Sensibility!' In Goethe's Writings too, we all know, the moral lesson is seldom so easily educed as one would wish. Alas, how seldom is he so direct in tendency as his own plain-spoken moralist at Plundersweilern:

> 'Dear Christian people, one and all,
> When will you cease your sinning?
> Else can your comfort be but small,
> Good hap scarce have beginning:
> For Vice is hurtful unto man,
> In Virtue lies his surest plan;'

or, to give it in the original words, the emphasis of which no foreign idiom can imitate:

> '*Die Tugend ist das hochste Gut,*
> *Das Laster Weh dem Menschen thut!*'

In which emphatic couplet, does there not, as the critics say in other cases, lie the essence of whole volumes, such as we have read?—

Goethe's far most important relation in Strasburg was the accidental temporary one with Herder: which issued, indeed, in a more permanent, though at no time an altogether intimate one. Herder, with much to give, had always something to

require; living with him seems never to have been wholly a sinecure. Goethe and he moreover were fundamentally different, not to say discordant; neither could the humour of the latter be peculiarly sweetened by his actual business in Strasburg, that of undergoing a surgical operation on 'the lachrymatory duct,' and, above all, an unsuccessful one:

'He was attending the Prince of Holstein-Eutin, who laboured under mental distresses, on a course of travel; and had arrived with him at Strasburg. Our society, so soon as his presence there was known, felt a strong wish to get near him; which happiness, quite unexpectedly and by chance, befel me first. I had gone to the Inn *zum Geist*, visiting I forget what stranger of rank. Just at the bottom of the stairs I came upon a man, like myself about to ascend, whom by his look I could take to be a clergyman. His powdered hair was fastened-up into a round lock, the black coat also distinguished him; still more a long black silk mantle, the end of which he had gathered together and stuck into his pocket. This in some measure surprising, yet on the whole gallant and pleasing figure, of whom I had already heard speak, left me no doubt but it was the famed Traveller; and my address soon convinced him that he was known to me. He asked my name, which could not be of any significance to him; however, my openness seemed to give pleasure, for he replied to it in friendly style, and as we stept upstairs, forthwith showed himself ready for a lively communication. Our visit also was to the same party; and before separating I begged permission to wait upon himself, which he kindly enough accorded me. I delayed not to make repeated use of this preferment; and was the longer the more attracted towards him. He had something softish in his manner, which was fit and dignified, without strictly being bred. A round face; a fine brow; a somewhat short blunt nose; a somewhat projected, yet highly characteristic, pleasant, amiable mouth. Under black eyebrows, a pair of coal-black eyes, which failed not of their effect, though one of them was wont to be red and inflamed.'

With this gifted man, by five years his senior, whose writings had already given him a name, and announced the much that lay in him, the open-hearted disciple could manifoldly communicate, learning and enduring. Erelong, under that 'softish manner,' there disclosed itself a 'counterpulse' of causticity, of ungentle almost noisy banter; the blunt nose was too often curled in an adunco-suspensive manner. Whatsoever of self-complacency, of acquired attachment and insight, of self-sufficiency well or ill grounded, lay in the youth, was exposed, we can fancy, to the severest trial. In Herder too, as in an expressive microcosm, he might see imaged the whole wild

world of German literature, of European Thought; its old workings and misworkings, its best recent tendencies and efforts; what its past and actual wasteness, perplexity, confusion worse confounded, was. In all which, moreover, the bantered, yet imperturbably inquiring brave young man had quite other than a theoretic interest, being himself minded to dwell there. It is easy to conceive that Herder's presence, stirring-up in that fashion so many new and old matters, would mightily aggravate the former 'fermentation;' and thereby, it is true, unintentionally or not, forward the same towards clearness.

In fact, with the hastiest glance over the then position of the world spiritual, we shall find that as Disorder is never wanting (and for the young spiritual hero, who is there only to destroy Disorder and make it Order, can least of all be wanting), so, at the present juncture, it specially abounded. Why dwell on this often-delineated Epoch? Over all Europe the reign of Earnestness had now wholly dwindled into that of Dilettantism. The voice of a certain modern 'closet-logic,' which called itself, and could not but call itself, Philosophy, had gone forth, saying, Let there be darkness, and there was darkness. No Divinity any longer dwelt in the world; and as men cannot do without a Divinity, a sort of terrestrial-upholstery one had been got together, and named TASTE, with medallic virtuosi and picture cognoscenti, and enlightened letter and belles-lettres men enough for priests. To which worship, with its stunted formularies and hungry results, must the earnest mind, like the hollow and shallow one, adjust itself, as best might be. To a new man, no doubt, the Earth is always new, never wholly without interest. Knowledge, were it only that of dead languages, or of dead actions, the foreign tradition of what others had acquired and done, was still to be searched after; fame might be enjoyed if procurable; above all, the culinary and brewing arts remained in pristine completeness, their results could be relished with pristine vigour. Life lumbered along, better or worse, in pitiful discontent, not yet in decisive desperation, as through a dim day of languor, sultry and sunless. Already, too, on the horizon might be seen clouds, might be heard murmurs, which by and by proved themselves of an electric character, and were to cool and clear that same sultriness in wondrous deluges.

To a man standing in the midst of German literature, and looking out thither for his highest good, the view was troubled perhaps with various peculiar perplexities. For two centuries, German literature had lain in the sere leaf. The Luther, 'whose

words were half battles,' and such half battles as could shake and overset half Europe with their cannonading, had long since gone to sleep; and all other words were but the miserable bickering of theological camp-sutlers in quarrel over the stripping of the slain. Ulrich Hutten slept silent, in the little island of the Zurich Lake; the weary and heavy-laden had wiped the sweat from his brow, and laid him down to rest there: the valiant, fire-tempered heart, with all its woes and loves and loving indignations, mouldered, cold, forgotten; with such a pulse no new heart rose to beat. The tamer Opitzes and Flemmings of a succeeding era had, in like manner, long fallen obsolete. One unhappy generation after another of pedants, 'rhizophagous,' living on roots, Greek or Hebrew; of farce-writers, gallant-verse writers, journalists and other jugglers of nondescript sort, wandered in nomadic wise, whither provender was to be had; among whom, if a passionate Gunther go with some emphasis to ruin; if an illuminated Thomasius, earlier than the general herd, deny witchcraft, we are to esteem it a felicity. This too, however, has passed; and now, in manifold enigmatical signs, a new Time announces itself. Well-born Hagedorns, munificent Gleims have again rendered the character of Author honourable; the polish of correct, assiduous Rabeners and Ramlers have smoothed away the old impurities; a pious Klopstock, to the general enthusiasm, rises anew into something of seraphic music, though by methods wherein he can have no follower; the brave spirit of a Lessing pierces, in many a life-giving ray, through the dark inertness: Germany has risen to a level with Europe, is henceforth participant of all European influences; nay it is now appointed, though not yet ascertained, that Germany is to be the leader of spiritual Europe. A deep movement agitates the universal mind of Germany, though as yet no one sees towards what issue; only that heavings and eddyings, confused conflicting tendencies, work unquietly everywhere; the movement is begun and will not stop, but the course of it is yet far from ascertained. Even to the young man now looking-on with such anxious intensity had this very task been allotted: To find it a course, and set it flowing thereon.

Whoever will represent this confused revolutionary condition of all things, has but to fancy how it would act on the most susceptive and comprehensive of living minds; what a Chaos he had taken in, and was dimly struggling to body-forth into a Creation. Add to which, his so confused, contradictory personal condition; appointed by a positive father to be practitioner of

Law, by a still more positive mother (old Nature herself) to be practitioner of Wisdom, and Captain of spiritual Europe: we have confusion enough for him, doubts economic and doubts theologic, doubts moral and æsthetical, a whole world of confusion and doubt.

Nevertheless to the young Strasburg student the gods had given their most precious gift, which is worth all others, without which all others are worth nothing; a seeing eye and a faithful loving heart:

> *'Er hatt' ein Auge treu und klug,*
> *Und war auch liebevoll genug,*
> *Zu schauen manches klar und rein,*
> *Und wieder alles zu machen sein;*
> *Hatt' auch eine Zunge die sic ergoss,*
> *Und leicht und fein in Worte floss;*
> *Dess thaten die Musen sich erfreun,*
> *Wollten ihn zum Meistersänger weihn.'**

A mind of all-piercing vision, of sunny strength, not made to ray-out darker darkness, but to bring warm sunlight, all-purifying, all-uniting. A clear, invincible mind, and 'consecrated to be Master-singer' in quite another guild than that Nürnberg one.

His first literary productions fall in his twenty-third year; *Werter*, the most celebrated of these, in his twenty-fifth. Of which wonderful Book, and its now recognised character as poetic (and prophetic) utterance of the World's Despair, it is needless to repeat what has elsewhere been written. This and *Götz von Berlichingen*, which also, as a poetic looking-back into the past, was a word for the world, have produced incalculable effects;—which now indeed, however some departing echo of them may linger in the wrecks of our own Mosstrooper and Satanic Schools, do at length all happily lie behind us. Some trifling incidents at Wetzlar, and the suicide of an unhappy acquaintance, were the means of 'crystallising' that wondrous perilous stuff, which the young heart oppressively held dissolved in it, into this world-famous, and as it proved world-medicative *Werter*. He had gone to Wetzlar with an eye still to Law; which now, however, was abandoned, never to be resumed. Thus did he too, 'like Saul the son of

* *Hans Sachsens Poetische Sendung* (*Goethes Werke*, xiii.); a beautiful piece (a very *Hans Sachs beatified*, both in character and style), which we wish there was any possibility of translating.

Kish, go out to seek his father's asses, and instead thereof find a kingdom.'

With the completion of these two Works (a completion in every sense, for they were not only emitted, but speedily also *de*mitted, and seen over, and left behind), commences what we can specially call his Life, his activity as Man. The outward particulars of it, from this point where his own Narrative ends, have been briefly summed-up in these terms:

'In 1776, the Heir-apparent of Weimar was passing through Frankfort, on which occasion, by the intervention of some friends, he waited upon Goethe. The visit must have been mutually agreeable; for a short time afterwards the young Author was invited to court; apparently to contribute his assistance in various literary institutions and arrangements then proceeding or contemplated; and in pursuance of this honourable call, he accordingly settled at Weimar, with the title of *Legionsrath*, and the actual dignity of a place in the *Collegium*, or Council. The connexion begun under such favourable auspices, and ever afterwards continued under the like or better, has been productive of important consequences, not only to Weimar but to all Germany. The noble purpose undertaken by the Duchess Amelia was zealously forwarded by the young Duke on his accession; under whose influence, supported and directed by his new Councillor, this inconsiderable state has gained for itself a fairer distinction than any of its larger, richer or more warlike neighbours. By degrees whatever was brightest in the genius of Germany had been gathered to this little court; a classical theatre was under the superintendence of Goethe and Schiller; here Wieland taught and sung; in the pulpit was Herder; and possessing such a four, the small town of Weimar, some five-and-twenty years ago, might challenge the proudest capital of the world to match it in intellectual wealth. Occupied so profitably to his country, and honourably to himself, Goethe continued rising in favour with his Prince; by degrees a political was added to his literary trust; in 1779 he became Privy Councillor; President in 1782; and at length after his return from Italy, where he had spent two years in varied studies and observation, he was appointed Minister; a post which he only a few years ago resigned, on his final retirement from public affairs.'

Notable enough that little Weimar should, in this particular, have brought back, as it were, an old Italian Commonwealth into the nineteenth century! For the Petrarcas and Boccaccios, though reverenced as Poets, were not supposed to have lost their wits as men; but could be employed in the highest services of the state, not only as fit, but as the fittest, to discharge these. Very different with us, where Diplomatists

and Governors can be picked up from the highways, or chosen in the manner of blindman's buff (the first figure you clutch, say rather that clutches *you*, will make a governor); and, even in extraordinary times, it is thought much if a Milton can become Latin Clerk under some Bulstrode Whitelock, and be called 'one Mr. Milton.' As if the poet, with his poetry, were no other than a pleasant mountebank, with faculty of a certain ground-and-lofty tumbling which would amuse; for which you must throw him a few coins, a little flattery, otherwise he would not amuse you with it. As if there were any talent whatsoever; above all, as if there were any talent of Poetry (by the consent of all ages the highest talent, and sometimes pricelessly high), the first foundation of which were not even these two things (properly but one thing): intellectual Perspicacity, with force and honesty of Will. Which two, do they not, in their simplest quite naked form, constitute the very equipment a Man of Business needs; the very implements whereby *all* business, from that of the delver and ditcher to that of the legislator and imperator, is accomplished; as in their noblest concentration they are still the moving faculty of the Artist and Prophet!

To Goethe himself this connexion with Weimar opened the happiest course of life which, probably, the age he lived in could have yielded him. Moderation, yet abundance; elegance without luxury or sumptuosity: Art enough to give a heavenly firmament to his existence; Business enough to give it a solid earth. In his multifarious duties he comes in contact with all manner of men; gains experience and tolerance of all men's ways. A faculty like his, which could master the highest spiritual problems and conquer Evil Spirits in their own domain, was not likely to be foiled by such when they put-on the simpler shape of material clay. The greatest of Poets is also the skilfulest of Managers: the little terrestrial Weimar trust committed to him prospers; and one sees with a sort of smile, in which may lie a deep seriousness, how the Jena Museums, University arrangements, Weimar Art-exhibitions and Palace-buildings, are guided smoothly on, by a hand which could have worthily swayed imperial sceptres. The world, could it intrust its imperial sceptres to such hands, were blessed: nay to this man, without the world's consent given or asked, a still higher function *had* been committed. But on the whole, we name his external life happy, among the happiest, in this, that a noble princely Courtesy could dwell in it, based on the worship, by speech and practice, of Truth only (for his victory, as we said

above, was so complete, as almost to hide that there had been a struggle), and the worldly could praise him as the most agreeable of men, and the spiritual as the highest and clearest; but happy above all, in this, that it forwarded him, as no other could have done, in his inward life, the good or evil hap of which was alone of permanent importance.

The inward life of Goethe, onward from this epoch, lies nobly recorded in the long series of his Writings. Of these, meanwhile, the great bulk of our English world has nowise yet got to such understanding and mastery, that we could with much hope of profit, go into a critical examination of their merits and characteristics. Such a task can stand-over till the day for it arrive; be it in this generation, or the next, or after the next. What has been elsewhere already set forth suffices the present want, or needs only to be repeated and enforced; the expositor of German things must say, with judicious Zanga in the play: "First recover that, then shalt thou know more." A glance over the grand outlines of the matter, and more especially under the aspect suitable to these days, can alone be in place here.

In *Goethe's Works*, chronologically arranged, we see this above all things: A mind working itself into clearer and clearer freedom; gaining a more and more perfect dominion of its world. The pestilential fever of Scepticism runs through its stages; but happily it ends and disappears at the last stage, not in death, not in chronic malady (the commonest way), but in clearer, henceforth invulnerable health. *Werter* we called the voice of the world's despair: passionate, uncontrollable is this voice; not yet melodious and supreme,—as nevertheless we at length hear it in the wild apocalyptic *Faust:* like a death-song of departing worlds; no voice of joyful 'morning stars singing together' over a Creation; but of red nigh-extinguished midnight stars, in spheral swan-melody, proclaiming, It is ended!

What follows, in the next period, we might, for want of a fitter term, call Pagan or Ethnic in character; meaning thereby an anthropomorphic character, akin to that of old Greece and Rome. *Wilhelm Meister* is of that stamp: warm, hearty, sunny human Endeavour; a free recognition of Life, in its depth, variety and majesty; as yet no Divinity recognised there. The famed *Venetian Epigrams* are of the like Old Ethnic tone: musical, joyfully strong; true, yet not the whole truth, and

sometimes in their blunt realism jarring on the sense. As in this, oftener cited perhaps, by a certain class of wise men, than the due proportion demanded:

Why so bustleth the People and crieth?—Would find itself victual,
Children too would beget, feed on the best may be had!
Mark in thy notebooks, Traveller, this, and at home go do likewise:
Farther reacheth no man, make he what stretching he will.

Doubt, reduced into Denial, now lies prostrate under foot: the fire has done its work, an old world is in ashes; but the smoke and the flame are blown away, and a sun again shines clear over the ruin, to raise therefrom a new nobler verdure and flowerage. Till at length, in the third or final period, melodious Reverence becomes triumphant; a deep all-pervading Faith, with mild voice, grave as gay, speaks forth to us in a *Meisters Wanderjahre*, in a *West-Œstlicher Divan;* in many a little *Zahme Xenie*, and true-hearted little rhyme, 'which,' it has been said, 'for pregnancy and genial significance, except in the 'Hebrew Scriptures, you will nowhere match.' As here, striking-in almost at a venture:

Like as a Star,
That maketh not haste,
That taketh not rest,
Be each one fulfilling
His god-given Hest.*

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* *Wie das Gestirn,*
Ohne Hast,
Aber ohne Rast,
Drehe sich jeder
Um die eigne Last.

So stands it in the original; hereby, however, hangs a tale:

'A fact,' says one of our fellow-labourers in this German vineyard, 'has but now come to our knowledge, which we take pleasure and pride in stating. Fifteen Englishmen, entertaining that high consideration for the good Goethe, which the labours and high deserts of a long life usefully employed so richly merit from all mankind, have presented him with a highly-wrought Seal, as a token of their veneration.' We must pass over the description of the gift, for it would be too elaborate; suffice it to say, that amid tasteful carving and emblematic embossing enough, stood these words engraven on a gold belt, on the four sides respectively: *To the German Master: From Friends in England:*

Or this small Couplet, which the reader, if he will, may substitute for the whole horse-loads of *Essays on the Origin of Evil;* a spiritual manufacture which, in these enlightened times, ought ere now to have gone out of fashion :

"What shall I teach thee, the foremost thing?"
Couldst teach me off my own Shadow to spring!

Or the pathetic picturesqueness of this:

A rampart-breach is every Day,
Which many mortals are storming·
Fall in the gap who may
Of the slain no heap is forming.

Eine Bresche ist jeder Tag,
Die viele Menschen erstürmen;
Wer da auch fallen mag,
Die Todten sich niemals thürmen.

28*th August:* 1831; finally, that the impression was a star encircled with a serpent-of-eternity, and this motto: *Ohne Hast Aber Ohne Rast.*

'The following is the Letter which accompanied it:

'"*To the Poet Goethe, on the* 28*th of August* 1831.

'"Sir,—Among the friends whom this so interesting Anniversary calls round you, may we 'English friends,' in thought and symbolically, since personally it is impossible, present ourselves to offer you our affectionate congratulations. We hope you will do us the honour to accept this little Birthday Gift, which, as a true testimony of our feelings, may not be without value.

'"We said to ourselves: As it is always the highest duty and pleasure to show reverence to whom reverence is due, and our chief, perhaps our only benefactor is he who by act and word instructs us in wisdom,—so we, undersigned, feeling towards the Poet Goethe as the spiritually taught towards their spiritual teacher, are desirous to express that sentiment openly and in common; for which end we have determined to solicit his acceptance of a small English gift, proceeding from us all equally, on his approaching birthday; that so, while the venerable man still dwells among us, some memorial of the gratitude we owe him, and think the whole world owes him, may not be wanting.

'"And thus our little tribute, perhaps among the purest that men could offer to man, now stands in visible shape, and begs to be received. May it be welcome, and speak permanently of a most close relation, though wide seas flow between the parties!

In such spirit, and with an eye that takes-in all provinces of human Thought, Feeling and Activity, does the Poet stand forth as the true prophet of his time; victorious over its contradiction, possessor of its wealth; embodying the nobleness of the past into a new whole, into a new vital nobleness for the present and the future. Antique nobleness in all kinds, yet worn with new clearness; the spirit of it is preserved and again revealed in shape, when the former shape and vesture had become old (as vestures do), and was dead and cast forth; and we mourned as if the spirit too were gone. This, we are aware, is a high saying; applicable to no other man living, or that has lived for some two centuries; ranks Goethe, not only as the highest man of his time, but as a man of universal Time, important for all generations,—one of the landmarks in the History of Men.

Thus, from our point of view, does Goethe rise on us as the Uniter, and victorious Reconciler, of the distracted, clashing elements of the most distracted and divided age that the world

'"We pray that many years may be added to a life so glorious, that all happiness may be yours, and strength given to complete your high task, even as it has hitherto proceeded, like a star, without haste, yet without rest.

'"We remain, Sir, your friends and servants,

'"FIFTEEN ENGLISHMEN."

'The wonderful old man, to whom distant and unknown friends had paid such homage, could not but be moved at sentiments expressed in such terms. We hear that he values the token highly, and has condescended to return the following lines for answer:

"DEN FUNFZEHN ENGLISCHEN FREUNDEN.

Worte, die der Dichter spricht,
Treu, in heimischen Bezirken
Wirken gleich, doch weiss er nicht
Ob sie in die Ferne wirken.

Britten! habt sie aufgefasst:
'Thätigen Sinn, das Thun gezügelt;
Stetig Streben ohne Hast;'
Und so wollt Ihrs denn besiegelt!

"*Weimar, d. 28ten August*, 1831. GOETHE."'

(*Fraser's Magazine*, xxii. 447.)

And thus, as it chanced, was the poet's *last* birthday celebrated by an outward ceremony of a peculiar kind; wherein too, it is to be hoped, might lie some inward meaning and sincerity.

has witnessed since the Introduction of the Christian Religion, to which old chaotic Era, of world-confusion and world-*re*fusion, of blackest darkness, succeeded by a dawn of light and nobler 'dayspring from on high,' this wondrous Era of ours is, indeed, oftenest likened. To the faithful heart let no era be a desperate one! It is ever the nature of Darkness to be followed by a new nobler Light; nay to produce such. The woes and contradictions of an Atheistic time; of a world sunk in wickedness and baseness and unbelief, wherein also physical wretchedness, the disorganisation and broken-heartedness of whole classes struggling in ignorance and pain will not fail: all this, the view of all this, falls like a Sphinx-question on every new-born earnest heart, a life-and-death entanglement for every earnest heart to deliver itself from, and the world from. Of Wisdom cometh Strength: only when there is 'no vision' do the people perish. But, by natural vicissitude, the age of *Persiflage* goes out, and that of earnest unconquerable Endeavour must come in: for the ashes of the old fire will not warm men anew; the new generation is too desolate to indulge in mockery,—unless, perhaps, in bitter suicidal mockery of itself! Thus after Voltaires enough have laughed and sniffed at what is false, appear some Turgots to ask what is true. Woe to the land where, in these seasons, no prophet arises; but only censors, satirists and embittered desperadoes, to make the evil worse; at best but to accelerate a consummation, which in accelerating they have aggravated! Old Europe had its Tacitus and Juvenal; but these availed not. New Europe too has had its Mirabeaus, and Byrons, and Napoleons, and innumerable red-flaming meteors, shaking pestilence from their hair; and earthquakes and deluges, and Chaos come again; but the clear Star, day's harbinger (*Phosphoros*, the bringer of *light*), had not yet been recognised.

That in Goethe there lay Force to educe reconcilement out of such contradiction as man is now born into, marks him as the Strong One of his time; the true *Earl*, though now with quite other weapons than those old steel *Jarls* were used to! Such reconcilement of contradictions, indeed, is the task of every man. the weakest reconciles somewhat; reduces old chaotic elements into new higher order; ever, according to faculty and endeavour, brings good out of evil. Consider now what faculty and endeavour must belong to the highest of such tasks, which virtually includes all others whatsoever! The thing that was given this man to reconcile (to begin

reconciling and teach us how to reconcile), was the inward spiritual chaos; the centre of all other confusions, outward and inward: he was to close the Abyss out of which such manifold destruction, moral, intellectual, social, was proceeding.

The greatness of his Endowment, manifested in such a work, has long been plain to all men. That it belongs to the highest class of human endowments, entitling the wearer thereof, who so nobly used it, to the appellation, in its strictest sense, of Great Man,—is also becoming plain. A giant strength of Character is to be traced here; mild and kindly and calm, even as strength ever is. In the midst of so much spasmodic Byronism, bellowing till its windpipe is cracked, how very different looks *this* symptom of strength: 'He appeared to aim at pushing away from him everything that did not hang upon his individual will.' 'In his own imperturbable firmness of character, he had grown into the habit of never contradicting any one. On the contrary, he listened with a friendly air to every one's opinion, and would himself elucidate and strengthen it by instances and reasons of his own. All who did not know him fancied that he thought as they did; for he was possessed of a preponderating intellect, and could transport himself into the mental state of any man, and imitate his manner of conceiving.'* Beloved brethren, who wish to be strong! Had not the man, who could take this smooth method of it, more strength in him than any teeth-grinding, glass-eyed 'lone Caloyer' you have yet fallen-in with? Consider your ways; consider, first, whether you cannot do with being *weak!* If the answer still prove negative, consider, secondly, what strength actually is, and where you are to try for it. A certain strong man, of former time, fought stoutly at Lepanto; worked stoutly as Algerine slave; stoutly delivered himself from such working; with stout cheerfulness endured famine and nakedness and the world's ingratitude; and, sitting in jail, with the one arm left him, wrote our joyfulest, and all but our deepest, modern book, and named it *Don Quixote:* this was a genuine strong man. A strong man, of recent time, fights little for any good cause anywhere; works weakly as an English lord; weakly delivers himself from such working; with weak despondency endures the cackling of plucked geese at St. James's; and, sitting in sunny Italy, in his coach-and-four, at a distance of two thousand miles from them, writes, over many

* *Wilhelm Meister*, book vi.

reams of paper, the following sentence, with variations: *Saw ever the world one greater or unhappier?* This was a sham strong man. Choose ye.—

Of Goethe's spiritual Endowment, looked at on the Intellectual side, we have (as indeed lies in the nature of things, for moral and intellectual are fundamentally one and the same) to pronounce a similar opinion; that it is great among the very greatest. As the first gift of all, may be discerned here utmost Clearness, all-piercing faculty of Vision; whereto, as we ever find it, all other gifts are superadded; nay, properly they are but other forms of the same gift. A nobler power of insight than this of Goethe you in vain look for, since Shakspeare passed away. In fact, there is much every way, here in particular, that these two minds have in common. Shakspeare too does not look *at* a thing, but into it, through it; so that he constructively comprehends it, can take it asunder, and put it together again; the thing melts, as it were, into light under his eye, and anew *creates* itself before him. That is to say, he is a Thinker in the highest of all senses: he is a Poet. For Goethe, as for Shakspeare, the world lies all translucent, all *fusible* we might call it, encircled with WONDER; the Natural in reality the Supernatural, for to the seer's eyes both become one. What are the *Hamlets* and *Tempests*, the *Fausts* and *Mignons*, but glimpses accorded us into this translucent, wonder-encircled world; revelations of the mystery of all mysteries, Man's Life as it actually is?

Under other secondary aspects the poetical faculty of the two will still be found cognate. Goethe is full of *figurativeness;* this grand light-giving Intellect, as all such are, is an imaginative one,—and in a quite other sense than most of our unhappy Imaginatives will imagine. Gall the Craniologist declared him to be a born *Volksredner* (popular orator), both by the figure of his brow, and what was still more decisive, because 'he could not speak but a figure came.' Gall saw what was high as his own nose reached,

> High as the nose doth reach, all clear!
> What higher lies, they ask: Is it here?

A far different figurativeness was this of Goethe than popular oratory has work for. In figures of the popular-oratory kind, Goethe, throughout his Writings at least, is nowise the most copious man known to us, though on a stricter scrutiny we may

find him the richest. Of your ready-made, coloured-paper metaphors, such as can be sewed or plastered on the surface, by way of giving an ornamental finish to the rag-web already woven, we speak not; there is not one such to be discovered in all his Works. But even in the use of genuine metaphors, which are not haberdashery ornament, but the genuine new vesture of new thoughts, he yields to lower men (for example to Jean Paul); that is to say, in fact, he is more master of the *common* language, and can oftener make *it* serve him. Goethe's figurativeness lies in the very centre of his being, manifests itself as the constructing of the inward elements of a thought, as the *vital* embodiment of it: such figures as those of Goethe you will look for through all modern literature, and except here and there in Shakspeare, nowhere find a trace of. Again, it is the same faculty in higher exercise, that enables the poet to construct a Character. Here too Shakspeare and Goethe, unlike innumerable others, are *vital;* their construction begins at the *heart* and flows outward as the life-streams do; fashioning the *surface*, as it were, spontaneously. These Macbeths and Falstaffs, accordingly, these Fausts and Philinas have a verisimilitude and life that separates them from all other fictions of late ages. All others, in comparison, have more or less the nature of hollow vizards, constructed from without inwards, painted *like*, and deceptively put in motion. Many years ago on finishing our first perusal of *Wilhelm Meister*, with a very mixed sentiment in other respects, we could not but feel that here lay more insight into the elements of human nature, and a more poetically perfect combining of these, than in all the other fictitious literature of our generation.

Neither, as an additional similarity (for the great is ever like itself), let the majestic Calmness of both be omitted; their perfect tolerance for all men and all things. This too proceeds from the same source, perfect clearness of vision: he who comprehends an object cannot hate it, has already begun to love it. In respect of style, no less than of character, this calmness and graceful smooth-flowing softness is again characteristic of both; though in Goethe the quality is more complete, having been matured by far more assiduous study. Goethe's style is perhaps to be reckoned the most excellent that our modern world, in any language, can exhibit. 'Even to a foreigner,' says one, 'it is full of character and secondary meanings; polished, yet vernacular and cordial, it sounds like the dialect of wise, antique-minded, true-hearted men: in

poetry, brief, sharp, simple and expressive: in prose, perhaps still more pleasing; for it is at once concise and full, rich, clear, unpretending and melodious; and the sense, not presented in alternating flashes, piece after piece revealed and withdrawn, rises before us as in continuous dawning, and stands at last simultaneously complete, and bathed in the mellowest and ruddiest sunshine. It brings to mind what the prose of Hooker, Bacon, Milton, Browne, would have been, had they written under the good without the bad influences of that French precision, which has polished and attenuated, trimmed and impoverished all modern languages; made our meaning clear, and too often shallow as well as clear.'

Finally, as Shakspeare is to be considered as the greater nature of the two, so on the other hand we must admit him to have been the less cultivated, and much the more careless. What Shakspeare *could* have done we nowhere discover. A careless mortal, open to the Universe and its influences, not caring strenuously to open himself; who, Prometheus-like, will scale Heaven (if it so must be), and is satisfied if he therewith pay the rent of his London Playhouse; who, had the Warwickshire Justice let him hunt deer unmolested, might, for many years more, have lived quiet on the green earth without such aerial journeys: an unparalleled mortal. In the great Goethe, again, we see a man through life at his utmost strain; a man who, as he says himself, 'struggled toughly;' laid hold of all things, under all aspects, scientific or poetic; engaged passionately with the deepest interests of man's existence, in the most complex age of man's history. What Shakspeare's thoughts on 'God, Nature, Art,' would have been, especially had he lived to number fourscore years, were curious to know: Goethe's, delivered in many-toned melody, as the apocalypse of our era, are here for us to know.

Such was the noble talent entrusted to this man; such the noble employment he made thereof. We can call him, once more, 'a clear and universal man;' we can say that, in his universality, as thinker, as singer, as worker, he lived a life of antique nobleness under these new conditions; and, in so living, is alone in all Europe; the foremost, whom others are to learn from and follow. In which great act, or rather great sum-total of many acts, who shall compute what treasure of new strengthening, of faith become hope and vision, lies secured for all! The question, Can man still live in devoutness, yet

without blindness or contraction; in unconquerable steadfastness for the right, yet without tumultuous exasperation against the wrong; as an antique worthy, yet with the expansion and increased endowment of a modern? is no longer a question, but has become a certainty, and ocularly-visible fact.

We have looked at Goethe, as we engaged to do, 'on *this* side,' and with the eyes of 'this generation;' that is to say, chiefly as a world-changer, and benignant spiritual revolutionist: for in our present so astonishing condition of 'progress of the species,' such is the category under which we must try all things, wisdom itself. And, indeed, under this aspect too, Goethe's Life and Works are doubtless of incalculable value, and worthy our most earnest study: for his Spiritual History is, as it were, the ideal emblem of all true men's in these days; the goal of Manhood, which he attained, we too in our degree have to aim at; let us mark well the road he fashioned for himself, and in the dim weltering chaos rejoice to find a paved way.

Here, moreover, another word of explanation is perhaps worth adding. We mean, in regard to the controversy agitated (as about many things pertaining to Goethe) about his Political creed and practice, Whether he was Ministerial or in Opposition? Let the political admirer of Goethe be at ease: Goethe was both, and also neither! The 'rotten whitewashed (*gebrechliche übertünchte*) condition of society' was plainer to few eyes than to his, sadder to few hearts than to his. Listen to the Epigrammatist at Venice:

> To this stithy I liken the land, the hammer its ruler,
> And the people that plate, beaten between them that writhes:
> Woe to the plate, when nothing but wilful bruises on bruises
> Hit it at random; and made, cometh no Kettle to view!

But, alas, what is to be done?

> No Apostle-of-Liberty much to my heart ever found I;
> License, each for himself, this was at bottom their want.
> Liberator of many! first dare to be Servant of many:
> What a business is that, wouldst thou know it, go try!

Let the following also be recommended to all inordinate worshippers of Septennials, Triennials, Elective Franchise, and the Shameful Parts of the Constitution; and let each be a little tolerant of his neighbour's 'festoon,' and rejoice that he has himself found out *Freedom*,—a thing much wanted:

> Walls I can see tumbled down, walls I see also a-building;
> Here sit prisoners, there likewise do prisoners sit:
> Is the world, then, itself a huge prison? Free only the madman,
> His chains knitting still up into some graceful festoon?

So that, for the Poet, what remains but to leave Conservative and Destructive pulling one another's locks and ears off, as they will and can (the ulterior issue being long since indubitable enough); and, for his own part, strive day and night to forward the small suffering remnant of *Productives;* of those who, in true manful endeavour, were it under despotism or under sansculottism, create somewhat, with whom alone, in the end, does the hope of the world lie? Go thou and do likewise! Art thou *called* to politics, work therein, as this man would have done, like a real and not an imaginary workman. Understand well, meanwhile, that to no man is his political constitution 'a life, but only a house wherein his life is led;' and hast thou a nobler task than such *house*-pargeting and smoke-doctoring, and pulling down of ancient rotten rat-inhabited walls, leave such to the proper craftsman; honour the higher Artist, and good-humouredly say with him:

> All this is neither my coat nor my cake,
> Why fill my hand with other men's charges?
> The fishes swim at ease in the lake,
> And take no thought of the barges.

Goethe's political practice, or rather no-practice, except that of self-defence, is a part of his conduct quite inseparably coherent with the rest; a thing we could recommend to universal study, that the spirit of it might be understood by all men, and by all men imitated.

Nevertheless it is nowise alone on this revolutionary or 'progress-of-the-species' side that Goethe has significance; his Life and Work is no painted show but a solid reality, and may be looked at with profit on all sides, from all imaginable points of view. Perennial, as a possession for ever, Goethe's History and Writings abide there; a thousand-voiced 'Melody of Wisdom,' which he that has ears may hear. What the experience of the most complexly-situated, deep-searching, everyway *far-experienced* man has yielded him of insight, lies written for all men here. He who was of compass to know and feel more than any other man, this is the record of his knowledge and feeling. 'The deepest heart, the highest head to scan,' was not beyond his

faculty; thus, then, did he scan and interpret: let many generations listen, according to their want; let the generation which has no need of listening, and nothing new to learn there, esteem itself a happy one.

To us, meanwhile, to all that wander in darkness and seek light, as the one thing needful, be this possession reckoned among our choicest blessings and distinctions. *Colite talem virum;* learn of him, imitate, emulate him! So did *he* catch the Music of the Universe, and unfold it into clearness, and in authentic celestial tones bring it home to the hearts of men, from amid that soul-confusing Babylonish hubbub of this our new Tower-of-Babel era! For now too, as in that old time, had men said to themselves: Come, let us build a tower which shall reach to heaven; and by our steam-engines, and logic-engines, and skilful mechanism and manipulation, vanquish not only Physical Nature, but the divine Spirit of Nature, and scale the empyrean itself. Wherefore they must needs again be stricken with confusion of tongues (or of printing-presses); and *dispersed*,—to other work; wherein also, let us hope, their hammers and trowels shall better avail them.—

Of Goethe, with a feeling such as can be due to no other man, we now take farewell. *Vixit, vivit.*

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